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The editorial committee would like to acknowledge. That Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka (Ga-niyen-gé-haa-ga) Nation is recognized as the custodians on the lands and waters on which we gather. Tiohtiá:ke (jo-jya-gé)/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it ishome to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples.
We respect the continued connections with the past, present,and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous andother peoples within the Montreal Community.

Letter from the Editors:

The Department of Theological Studies is an admittedly small one, and too often the work that goes on here can seem somewhat clandestine. The students of this department study and write out of a passion for the subject of theology, hoping tomake some sense of cosmological questions, ancient language, current trends, and to give some semblance of honour to the myriad of theologians who came before us. Theology is ahumble pursuit, lonely at times, but infinitely worthwhile in theminds of those who study it. This journal is one of many ways we attempt to break out of hermitic selves and embrace theological traditions in a communal format. We owe so much to the professors, students, and affiliates of the Department of Theological Studies, and we thank them for their continued support. Thank you for reading, writing, and continuing to study the mysteries of God and Life with such passion.

With our appreciation,Your Editors

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The Spiritual Feast : Deepening the Friendship Between Denominations

Karla Reinhardt Falk

This article is adapted from "The Spirituality of Feasting: An Exercise in Practical Theology," a masters' thesis by Karla Reinhardt Falk, 2022, published by Concordia University.

EATING TOGETHER is a basic human method of bonding. It offers commensality by way of shared work in preparation of food and friendships forged around a table. Eating together can be spiritual sustenance because a shared grand meal has powerful potential to activate our physical, emotional, and spiritual senses. A spirituality of feasting is the product of food theology and practical theology. A spiritual feast involves prayerful preparation of food, a Eucharistic moment remembering Christ's death and resurrection, and a pointed discussion about a theological or Biblical theme that the host brings to the table discussion. But the key to a spirituality of feasting goes beyond shared food. Participants reflect on the theological reality of God's abundant offer of grace. They aim to develop a eucharistic approach to eating. They also reflect on the *perichoresis* of the Trinity, which inspires Christians in matters of sharing fellowship around a table. Practical theology offers a theological framework for feasting. The ecumenical dimension of a spiritual feast allows participants from varied Christian denominations the opportunity to find common ground with the "other" because those who share bread together have forged a bond not easily forgotten. Practicing a spirituality of feasting in an ecumenical setting also gives participants opportunity to discover similarities and differences through the non-denominational practice of spiritual feasting.

I begin this article by defining how I use the term spirituality and then describe the key concepts of grace and fasting. Food theology is where a spirituality of feasting finds its roots and entails a discussion of eucharistic eating. Practical theology is introduced as the scaffold a fully defined spirituality of feasting. Further support is provided by practical theology's insistence on ethnography, embodiment, habitus, interdisciplinary approach, and historical grounding. Table fellowship depends on a theology of hospitality. The article ends with a call to ecumenical feasting.

Spirituality

The core definition of a spirituality is to study the "deepest desires of the human heart for meaning, purpose, and connection, with the deep life lived intentionally in reference to something larger than oneself."[1] It is a "theology that pays attention to the way we live life in light of our Christian beliefs and our understanding of God. Its emphasis is on the lived experience of the Christian faith. It seeks to avoid the abstract; instead, it seeks to stay grounded in the everyday and the personal as much as possible."[2] The aim of this kind of spiritual exercise is "to develop in people the habits that will enable them to live a more ordered, measured, reflective, free, attentive, available, and responsible life…the careful attention that promotes thoughtful eating, particularly eating that is informed by the Eucharistic table, will also potentially lead eaters into an understanding of food as ultimately rooted in the grace of God."[3]

Engagement on the personal level produces a shift for the theologian, or to use Bernard Lonergan's terminology, spiritual engagement is situated in the horizon of conversion. "It effects a vertical shift in horizons in which our being becomes being-in-love and in which the criteria for all our attending, understanding, judging, and responding become the criteria of love."[4] This has been my experience with feasting; when I have intentionally hosted and cooked a feast that I mean to feed my guests spiritually as well as physically, my reflection

[1] Marie McCarthy, "Spirituality in a Postmodern Era," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 196.
[2] Gisela H. Kreglinger, *The Spirituality of Wine* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 1.
[3] Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28–9.
[4] McCarthy, "Spirituality in a Postmodern Era," 204.

on the experience has produced a horizon of conversion [5].

The hope for an ecumenical feast is that the participants would experience a horizon of conversion that deepening friendship between believers of different denominations can sustain each other's faith. Basic practices like eating together provide a commensal ground for open understanding between denominations.

Spirituality of Feasting

A spirituality of feasting is finding God's overflowing love through relationships built around an abundant table. The abundance [6] of food and drink is an embodied experience of God's grace, defined as an unmerited love (Rom. 3:23-25; Eph. 2:8) that is wide and deep, more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:18-20). The practice of feasting offers an opportunity to reflect on a material bodily experience, which is both individual and corporate; the food and drink, the skill of the chef, the hospitality of the host, and the depth of friendship discovered through eating and drinking are simple in themselves but add up to an experience more than the sum of its parts. Choosing to find God in this experience is what makes feasting spiritual. The experience of feasting in and of itself is not what is spiritual. It takes the practitioner of feasting to do the work of theology [7]. These are the conditions ripe for ecumenical exploration and interchange.

Grace

Grace is revealed by the Gospel and grasped by faith [8], upholding the centrality of scripture: "there is no encounter with grace without the Word." [9] Food theologians also affirm that Scripture must be central because without it, "We can wind up simply saying that God endorses gourmet dining… Scripture calls us to the misappropriation of material

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[5] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: Published by University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1988), 123–27.

[6] Abundance is always relative to each practitioner's cultural experience and preference, socio-economic situation, and the availability of food stuffs. Abundance in Canada will look different when comparing regions or even neighbourhoods within a city and it will certainly look different when compared with regions on a different continent, Africa, for example.

[7] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 33.

[8] Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther*, 1962, 91, 140. Lutheran theology, unlike Catholic or evangelical Protestant theology, understands that faith was not a creaturely property completely destroyed by the Fall.

[9] Kirsi I. Stjerna, "Grace Only? Or, All Is Grace?," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 54, no. 3 (September 2015): 264.

goods and privileges, to care for those who are disadvantaged—the poor, victims of injustice, those who cannot help themselves." [10] It is the scripturally based Christian ethics that are at the core of food theology.

We begin with the Word, and from it proceeds our practices. Word and sacrament combine as an in-breaking of the New Creation in a bodily experience of hearing the Word mingled with water of baptism and bread and wine of communion [11]. Communion or the Eucharist is at the heart of a spirituality of feasting. Spiritual feasting helps us understand grace more viscerally, helping to close the gap between matter and spirit. Monica Hellwig cautions us that, "grace is not a substance. It is a relationship with God and with his creation." [12]

Further to relationality, the sacraments remind us that salvation is not for one worshipper but for the whole Body of Christ. Church communities have the powerful responsibility to mediate God's grace and God's redemption [13]. Although reflection on a spirituality of feasting may begin with the individual, shared table fellowship must include a community. The more diverse that community is the better and deeper we understand both each other and God's good purposes.

Karl Rahner describes grace in a transcendental light. "For Rahner,…grace is first and foremost a self-communication by God in his Trinitarian reality." [14] This Trinitarian self-communication is also conceived as God indwelling humans [15]. Angel Méndez-Montoya upholds the self-sharing gift of God with humanity through 'alimentary theology':

> The kenosis of the eucharistic gift is a self-immersion of Christ with the Holy Spirit into finite humanity and materiality. In the Eucharist, divinity takes the risk of becoming food because of a desire to indwell (or abide) in the beloved, just as food becomes a part of the eater. [16]

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[10] L. Shannon Jung, *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 136.

[11] Non-sacramental Christians will recognize the importance of baptism and communion but will not ascribe sacramentality to these acts.

[12] Monika Hellwig, *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World*, 2nd ed., rev. expanded (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1992), 53–4.

[13] Jung, 119.

[14] Weger, 88, 109.

[15] John P. Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," in *A World of Grace: An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology*, ed. Leo J. O'Donovan (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 66.

[16] Angel F. Méndez Montoya, *The Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist*

This is fundamental to a spirituality of feasting: to know that God through Christ abides in us because of overflowing grace and to experience that grace at the table laid abundantly and shared in Christian fellowship.

God's grace in Jesus Christ transforms our everyday eating and drinking. God corrects our senses so that we see, taste, consume, and comprehend not only food but divine grace as well. This correction of our senses also applies to being open to interdenominational interchange. Leon Kass suggests that festive dining can be an experience of grace, quoting from Karen Blixen's "Babette's Feast:" "Grace, my friends, demands nothing from us but that we shall await it with confidence and acknowledge it in gratitude." [17] Jung summarizes grace at the table well:

> The goodness of food, an incarnation of God's grace, can remind us of the grace of Jesus Christ. Good food and delightful meals can remind us of the many ways God's grace becomes incarnate in our lives. Furthermore, sharing such food can be a gracious sharing, an act of compassion to others because of the compassion that we have received from God and God's people. [18]

Fasting

The spiritual feast is not an everyday experience. It is a time set apart from quotidian eating which takes place in the context of weekly or monthly worship. If we were to feast even every week, it would become commonplace, which would dull the joyful experience of spiritual feasting.

Food theologians highlight the need for fasting. "In short, we feast to glorify God and we fast so we do not glorify ourselves." [19] Wirzba believes that feasting is a Sabbath observance. He teaches that the opposite of feasting is not fasting, but gluttony [20]. When we are gluttonous, our worship is oriented towards ourselves not God.

(Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 144. Méndez-Montoya is affirming the nature of transubstantiation withing the framework of eucharistic eating. Protestants may have a hard time swallowing this ideal. However, being open to other points of view will hopefully aid in an ecumenical effort, especially important in this study of the spirituality of feasting.

[17] Leon Kass, *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature*, University of Chicago Press ed (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 192.

[18] Jung, *Food for Life*, 106.

[19] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 137.

[20] Wirzba, 139.

Gluttony is not limited to personal experiences. Demanding festal amounts of food from our earth every day is also gluttonous. Theologians call out agri-business' destruction of creation and Western consumerism as complicit in disordering the natural rhythms of God's good intention for food. It is a major injustice to creation and a problem for Christian minds to address [21]. Food and theology calls both for systemic change but, crucially, also for a change in micropractices: buying locally and supporting community farmers are first remedial steps against agri-business' disordered globalization [22].

On the personal level, a fast is crucial because it helps us re-order our desires. The fast is required because it has power to turn our *habitus* towards God. Fasting has long been a part of spiritual training and discipline in Christian practice, noting that historically, fasting has been adopted "as a way of heightening awareness of the body's hungers, so as not to be controlled by them." [23] Hunger is an all-consuming drive but it is also a dimension of becoming spiritually mature [24]. Fasting leads us to realize the responsibilities of life together [25], the need for community to build relationship and foodways.

Hunger drives our desires. Hunger reminds us of our dependence on God and each other. Méndez-Montoya writes that fasting reminds us of God's providential care, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 [26] that we should "not live on bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." We long for Christ to come again to complete the redemption of creation. Keeping an annual rhythm of feast days set apart from ordinary eating helps the average Christian to catch a glimpse of the power in such an act. Longing, hunger, and desire for what is reserved for special occasions reminds us of our spiritual reality of living in the "already" of Christ's victory on the cross and hopeful waiting for the "not yet" of Christ's return.

Eschatological longing is what Robert Farrar Capon brings to life, inviting us to see a glimpse of the banquet in heaven at the end of time in the humble shared meal. This eschatological glimpse enlarges

[21] Wirzba, 71–109. Jennifer R. Ayres, *Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013). Ayres entire work is dedicated to this theme from various angles.
[22] Jung, *Food for Life*, 127.
[23] Dorothy C. Bass, "Eating," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 6.
[24] Hellwig, *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World*, 6–7.
[25] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 142.
[26] Méndez Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, 125.

our spiritual imaginations and reminds us that we are not meant to fast forever. The "stinginess" and "narrowness" of the soul that Capon refers to [27] could easily be overlaid on an ecumenical situation: eating food together reminds us of the "*largesse*" of God and that God is larger than our denominational differences.

Food and Theology

When describing my work, many have expressed surprise that there are theologians who study food. So, a word in the defense of food [28]. Anthropologists wonder: "Why is food taken for granted in academia?" [29] Warren Belasco's answer points to the philosophy of dualism that has pervaded scholarship, with the ascendent focus on the spirit and intellect. Also, the Victorian ideal of public and private spheres has hampered food studies as food was considered a private, female realm and not for public discussion. Feminism has done much to open avenues of questioning in food study. More recently, the food industry has worked through marketing to "obscure and mystify the links between the farm and the dinner table." [30] Food has become an abstraction and Belasco points out that one consequence of this is that people do not eat together regularly or as socially as they used to.

Theologians agree. Jung comments that "food doesn't seem to be on the table for theological discussion" and wonders how God got dissociated from food in the first place? [31] Wirzba focuses the de-contextualization of food, meaning how we have become divorced from how food is grown through the industrialization of farming and the marketing practices that currently operate in North America. He argues that these lead to a spiritual impoverishment of food but that we can break free from this poverty through engaging eating as a spiritual exercise [32]. Part of this spiritual exercise is to eat together, taking Jesus' example: "The ministries of Christ demonstrate that the path to full or

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[27] Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb: A Culinary Reflection*, 1st Harvest/HBJ ed, A Harvest/HBJ Book (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), 171.

[28] Michael Pollan and Penguin, *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* (London: Penguin Books, 2009). I use Pollan's title for this section deliberately, to demonstrate the current popularity of food in journalistic discourse, another layer of interdisciplinary study around food.

[29] Warren James Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts*, The Key Concepts (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2008), 2.

[30] Belasco, 4.

[31] Jung, *Food for Life*, 37.

[32] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, xvi.

abundant life is not a magical path. It is a practical journey that begins with eating. The gospels frequently show Jesus eating with people because table fellowship is among the most powerful ways we know to extend and share in each other's lives." [33]

Food and feasting are valid theological entry points because there are a host of questions, relationships, and doctrines that can be touched on through food. The interdisciplinary nature of food and theology naturally suits an ecumenical study. Eating together promotes connections between seemingly disparate groups of people. Asking for a shared spiritual experience in this context opens us to questions of faith, which can begin to be answered through relationships forged around a table.

Eucharistic Eating

A cornerstone in food and theology is Eucharistic eating. It begins with the doctrine of original sin, which is food-based; it is through disobedient eating that sin enters the world. It is fitting, therefore that the redemption of that sinful food act is mirrored by another food-based act, the Eucharist. New Testament descriptions of the Last Supper [34], as interpreted by the early church and developed over two millennia, have created a basis for Christian worship that is food-based. "From the perspective of the eucharistic feeding, the sin of the first Adam is unmasked in Jesus, the second Adam's, crucifixion, so that, by finally knowing sin as a refusal of God's love-as-nourishment, the partaker of the Eucharist can be radically healed, transfigured into the resurrected body of Christ." [35] The doctrine of the Eucharist remembers the salvific work of Christ on the cross and also points to eschatological hope of the future full redemption of the world when Christ comes again [36]. God's saving grace is lavished upon the communicants as they eat and drink.

By extension, all eating can have a eucharistic dimension. Wirzba defines eucharistic eating as remembering that Jesus abides in us, which inspires us to deep fellowship (*koinonia*) with others. Jesus abiding in us transforms us and reorders our desires to continually look outside of ourselves, to overcome exploitation, and to be attentive to the needs of others. "Eucharistic eating alters the relationships that make up our lives, gives them a self-offering character, and in doing so

[33] Wirzba, 147.
[34] 1 Cor 11:23-26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-23; John 6:35-53
[35] Méndez Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, 109.
[36] Méndez Montoya, 135.

changes the practice of life itself." [37] For Jung, a recognition of God's immanence demands that we learn Eucharistic eating, feasting in appreciation of God's goodness and sharing the feast in mission: "to proclaim the goodness of God in effecting our redemption and the redemption of the world. The Eucharist is finally the feast of the world's redemption, that is performative with a vengeance. We who share the Eucharist are to share the story of redemption and to live out the redeemed life." [38]

The application to feasting is layered. We must reorder our desires to engage in practical behaviours that aid in the ongoing redemption of the world. Feasting is an opportunity to declare that even though the world is broken because of sin, we can be a part of the ongoing redemption of the world through careful and considerate eating habits: saying grace or developing a thankful mindset, finding *Imago Dei* on the faces of those who work to bring food to our tables, choosing food that honours good stewardship of creation. These choices sound simple, but their implications are far reaching. If we do not choose thus, we run the risk of denying eucharistic truth, as Jung reminds us: "if we think of eating and drinking as only personal satisfaction, choosing not to see our bodily relation to creation and to others, we will miss the opportunity to experience the fullness of revelation, that is, for human bodies to be a means of grace." [39]

Dorothy Bass observes that "practices related to food, undertaken over time and in the company of wise and seasoned practitioners, have the power to form and even to transform persons and communities—a power acknowledged not only within Christianity but also in other religious traditions." [40] How we view eating is an important first step because it drives our habits. It is nothing short of transformation: "Eating at the eucharistic table we are asking to be transformed—given a life-enabling, blood infusion of sorts—so that whenever we eat, those we eat and those we eat with will have been welcomed and cherished as manifestations of God's love. This is no mere theoretical act. It is an economic and political act because it entails that all our relationships be inspired by attention and care." [41] In this way, eucharistic eating implies Christian food activism.

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[37] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 155, 158–60.
[38] Jung, *Food for Life*, 53.
[39] Jung, 39.
[40] Bass, "Eating," 6.
[41] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 178.

Practical Theology

A spirituality of feasting finds its frame of reference in food and theology and is given further scaffolding through the methods of practical theology. "Practical theology refers to an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday." [42] It is concerned with:

> the embodiment of religious belief in the day-to-day lives of individuals and communities. It engages personal, ecclesial, and social experience to discern the meaning of divine presence and to enable faithful human response. Practical theology is seldom a systematic enterprise, aimed at the ordering of beliefs about God, the church, or classic texts. More often it is an open-ended, contingent, unfinished grasp or analysis of faith in action. It focuses on the tangible, the local, the concrete, and the embodied. [43]

Practical theology expects an interdisciplinary and multivalent approach [44]; an historical grounding [45]; as clear as possible awareness of the socio-cultural context of both the practice and the practitioner [46]; and an embodied *habitus* (from Pierre Bourdieu) at the core of its study [47], and the anthropological tool of ethnography [48]. These categories are not discrete or separable; instead, they overlap considerably.

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[42] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.

[43] Miller-McLemore, 12.

[44] Miller-McLemore, 4. Elaine L. Graham, "On Becoming a Practical Theologian: Past, Present and Future Tenses," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 4 (August 31, 2017): 4 of 9.

[45] Mary McClintock Fulkerson, "Systematic Theology," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.

[46] Edward Farley, "Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 120–21.

[47] Fulkerson, "Systematic Theology," 5–6.

[48] Mary Clark Moschella, "Ethnography," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 9.

Defining Spiritual Feasting

"We might therefore characterize practice as 'purposeful activity performed by embodied persons in space and time as the subjects of agency and objects of history.'" [49] This purposeful activity Elaine Graham highlights is analyzed following Anselm's dictum of "faith seeking understanding." Roger Mager suggests that "applied to practice, this means that theology should not only be concerned with what people actually do (description) and what they should do (prescription), but also what they could do (reflection), with vision and insight, that is, with the exploration of possible meanings and models of existence." [50] Theologians bring Christian ethics to bear when *describing* where our global food situation is currently and points out the yawning gap between where we know, as stewards of the earth, it should be. Food and theology offer many suggestions for *reflection*, aimed at *prescribing* practical changes in behaviour from the level of ecosystems and agriculture to spiritual health and wellness. Historically, this is where food and theology began, and its application to feasting follows a short path: choose food that you know has been farmed sustainably that has not travelled far to get to you, as much as you are able. This is the starting place for what you serve at a festal table.

A spiritual practice of feasting, then, is one that needs to be aware of its own traditions, one that transmits values, and one that embodies faithful responses to the current situation of the practitioners. The practice of feasting itself is simple and is easily portable between denominations and cultures.

What to eat. Festal food is very different in each cultural context. In the cultural mosaic of Canada, a feast may include food from any number of cultural backgrounds: from Canada itself, Europe, Africa, Asia, or South America. What is served is not actually important, except it must be abundant, to set it apart from daily eating. There are two items that I believe must be present at a feast with spiritual intent, which are bread and wine, for obvious eucharistic reasons. Note that bread is

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[49] Elaine Graham, "Practical Theology as Transforming Practice," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 110.

[50] Robert Mager, "Action Theories," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.

culturally interpreted and will look different in France than it does in Egypt, for example. The wine should be one that is enjoyable for those present and drinkable and with the meal, so will follow personal preference [51].

Further, a symbolic food choice is lamb. The Passover lamb in Jewish tradition (Ex. 12) and the Christian extension of the symbol with the representation of Christ as the Lamb who was slain (Rev. 5:12, 13:8) constitute one reason to include it on the menu. Another is the pericope of John 6:53-58, where Jesus asks his disciples to eat his body and drink his blood, which many theologians see as a description of abiding in Christ. Fish is also a symbolic food, referencing the feeding of the multitudes (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14).

I feel strongly that a spiritual feast is one made by the hands of the practitioners. I have found that there is a layered depth of meditation and prayer when I cook for a feast and there is fellowship gained in cooking a meal with others. It is an expression of *agape* love for my guests: I spend several days thinking about them when I cook a feast; it is an opportunity to use my gifts and talents to demonstrate God's overflowing love. To ask my guests to receive this gift is another part of the exercise. If we can receive simple gifts of food and drink and table fellowship with open hearts and gratitude, we are one step closer to understanding that God wants us to receive God's gift of love—God's Son—in the same way.

Intention of host and cook. The host, who might be the same as the cook, chooses guests carefully and spends time to consider how best to lavish generosity on the guests. This does not require a large budget. To lavish generosity might look like an abundant potluck table filled with each guest's contribution. Attention is given to what the guests like to eat, their food restrictions in terms of allergies, etc. The host and cook pray for the guests before they arrive, as they arrive at the door, and after they go, asking that the table fellowship will prove to be an occasion where guest and host alike discern a movement of the Holy Spirit already active in their midst.

How Many. I advocate for tables of no larger than six to eight guests. Conversation becomes difficult for the whole table larger than eight people.

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[51] Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture*, 1. paperback ed (New York Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). In this history, Sack outlines why some Protestant North American groups refuse wine and use grape juice instead. In the present study, wine is assumed but there is room for cultural and denominational interpretation of a spirituality of feasting.

Ecumenical Celebration. The host welcomes everyone to the table, giving a short description of why they are there—to experience the overflowing love of God through abundant food and drink shared with friends. This may be explicitly referenced as an ecumenical venture. Table grace is said or sung. A toast may be given. An explicit reference to Communion or The Lord's Supper will be made. Some feasts may follow a spoken or sung liturgy. Some feasts may be quite relaxed without a liturgy or song. At some point in the meal, the host brings up a conversation that touches on the deep desires of the people at the table and links them with their journey of faith. In pursuit of ecumenical dialogue, this is a rich arena for open sharing.

Reflection. The final step is reflecting on the experience and seeking moments where something new about God was revealed because "theological reflection on experience can make both experience and theology come alive in a new way." [52] Hopefully in an interdenominational context, openness to the "other" encompassing their theological standpoints and worship practices will be a point of reflection, all the while remembering that God's grace is outpoured for all.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a tool used both in a study of spirituality and in practical theology, borrowed from anthropology [53]. It is the field study of people and culture and accomplishes "the complex tasks of observation, description, dialogue, and interpretation." [54] The work of ethnography is placed in the gaps and connections between theology and practice. It is a tool to assess the distance between what people preach or theologize and what they practice in their lived faith [55]. Reflection on the gaps where we seek deeper understanding takes on a worshipful habit in this context. "Ethnography is a practice of prayerful attentiveness to human beings in their spiritual lives. When the work of ethnography is approached in this way, it is a spiritual practice in itself

[52] Stephen Pattison, "Some Straw for Bricks: A Basic Introduction to Theological Reflection," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 139.

[53] Paloma Gay y Blasco and Huon Wardle, *How to Read Ethnography*, transferred to digital print (London: Routledge, 2009), 1.

[54] Clark Moschella, 1-2.

[55] Clark Moschella, 1. Meanwhile the composition of this thesis is for me, the theological testing of the field experiences gathered over my lifetime.

that may become an act of primary theology." [56] If ethnography is considered as a prayerful practice, it can help practical theologians learn *from* as well as *about* the practice of faith.

Reflecting on the numinous quality of a feast means more than just remembering the warm feeling experienced while feasting. It is helpful to remember that ethnography "is never just recollection: it is a reflection on, an examination of, and an argument about experience made from a particular standpoint." [57] Asking questions of experiences is critical because "experience is not yet theology; we have to test our experience and discover its content." [58] One useful ethnographic exercise is that of comparison and context [59]. What observations will we make in an ecumenical setting, where different theological perspectives are brought to the table? For example, how will it challenge our faith to feast with Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, who bring very different ideas about Communion to the festal table? We observe each other and ourselves so we can learn experientially from the experience of feasting together [60]. We seek greater depth of understanding as we feast together.

Embodied Theology

Embodiment within the food and theology discourse is intertwined with grace.

> Food is revelatory of the goodness and joy of the earth; it is also how we come to taste the language of grace and love; it is how we come to know community. Food opens up in us the visceral channels of knowledge. It enables us to experience love before we have a name for it. God comes to feed us, to fill us, to love us. We know grace first through our bodies. [61]

In line with the value practical theology places on finding meaning in the gaps between practice and theology, "embodiment insists on the in-betweenness, which is always mediated by the body," [62] and he points to the problems of a dualist worldview [63]. Following Jürgen Moltmann, if we think salvation is for an immortal

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[56] Clark Moschella, 4.
[57] Gay y Blasco and Wardle, *How to Read Ethnography*, 9.
[58] Jung, *Food for Life*, 33.
[59] Gay y Blasco and Wardle, *How to Read Ethnography*, 4.
[60] Clark Moschella, "Ethnography," 2.
[61] Jung, *Food for Life*, 45.
[62] Méndez Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, 61.
[63] Méndez Montoya, 53.

soul only, then we have no hope for a resurrected body, which invalidates the need for an incarnational Christ (John 1:14). Yet the biblical message is clear: "Flesh is the thing God loves. Flesh is what God constructed 'in his own image' and 'with his own hands.'(Col. 1:20)." [64]

Acknowledging the value of bodies—historically, in the present, and eschatologically—teaches us that a dualist worldview is more than unhelpful, it is inaccurate within a Christian framework. Embodied theology envisions a holistic world undivided by sharp mind/body duality. In this vein, Alexander Schmemann teaches us a eucharistic theology where there is no separation of spiritual and material: all the world belongs to God, stimulating the Christian's deep belief of God [65].

In postmodernism we have shifted away from dualism. Jung, writing in 2004, notes that since the mid-1980s the body was resurrected and God's incarnate presence became a topic in theology, thanks to the work of ecological and feminist theologians [66]. Feminist scholarship especially asked different questions than systematic theology, allowing previously "base" aspects of existence to enter theological debate. Embodied theology is central to food and theology because of the intimate bodily nature of food.

However, "embodied" can be used to mean different things. I affirm Miller-McLemore: we must not forget the actual corporeal body when theologizing [67]. Our bodies are places where theology can be experienced, as James Nelson declares:

> We are not simply asking what theology has to say about the body, as if theology were conducted from some superior vantage point by discarnate, disembodied spirits. We are asking what it means that we as body-selves participating in the reality of God and as body-selves reflect upon—theologize about—that reality. [68]

Embodied theology is confident in this reality because of the doctrine of Incarnation, which is at the core of food theology as well. For Méndez-Montoya, John 1:14 "The Word became flesh…" is the key to unlock the relationality between God and humanity. "Christ's

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[64] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 218–19.
[65] Aleksandr Dmitrievič Šmeman, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 2nd rev. ed (Crestwood (N.Y.): St. Vladimir's seminary press, 1973).
[66] Jung, *Food for Life*, 107.
[67] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Embodied Knowing, Embodied Theology: What Happened to the Body?," *Pastoral Psychology* 62, no. 5 (October 2013): 743–58.
[68] James B Nelson, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publ. House, 1979), 20.

flesh aligns itself with human flesh. In the flesh, Christ blends God's desires with the desires of humanity…God is not indifferent but shares divinity within and at the core of the human flesh." [69] The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ teaches us much because the way we relate body to body is ecologically and theologically significant: "embodiment is not alien to God, nor is it a reality only temporarily (and thus begrudgingly) assumed. Bodies are the places and the means of God's creating and sustaining love." [70]

To get a practice into our bodies, for worship to be formative, it needs to be done regularly. "In worship, texts and symbolic actions are inscribed on human bodies…the body remembers long after the mind may be dimmed…The body comes to understand, however inchoately, what it is to be created and redeemed in the image of God. Hence the psalmist's phrase 'O taste and see' exhibits an inner connection between a sensate bodily action and discernment." [71] Practicing spiritual feasting is formative in this way: the aesthetic sense that our body has to eat and drink and share table fellowship invites us into God's "real world," God's kingdom revealed on earth, and helps us to absorb the eschatological vision of shalom that may pass our intellect by, but which our body knows and understands.

Habitus

Practical theology emphasizes *habitus* as developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu conceives our everyday actions as practical knowledge, developed by our social situation in culture and, at the same time, that these actions are responsible for constructing our culture. His work highlights that what we do with our bodies is contrary to what intellectual idealism says about why we do what we do [72]. Practical theologians affirm that *habitus* are located in the body or subconscious, not the intellect, yet they regulate our actions and also provide a structure for improvising new action. Studying *habitus* allows practical theologians to analyze both high level structures in culture as well as at the low level of individual actions, for a more complete understanding of a given society [73]. *Habitus* benefits us by revealing gaps between

[69] Méndez Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, 36–7.
[70] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 175.
[71] Don E. Saliers, "Worship," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 8.
[72] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Reprinted (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008), 52.
[73] Ted Smith, "Theories of Practice," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to*

intellectual values and everyday behaviour.

Take an example in eucharistic eating. James KA Smith became interested in sustainable agriculture and consumer practice because of a Christian stewardship worldview, especially through reading Wendell Berry. He found himself very aware of a gap between his *habitus* and what he had come to think of as his intellectual perspective on good Christian food practice. One day while reading Berry's anthology, *Bringing It to the Table*, he was

> suddenly struck by an ugly irony: here I was reading Wendell Berry in the food court in Costco. There are so many things wrong with that sentence, I don't even know where to begin. Indeed, 'the food court at Costco' might be a kind of shorthand for Berry's picture of the sixth circle of hell. So how might one account for this gap between my thought and my action—between my passionate intellectual assent to these ideas and my status quo action? Why do I *believe* Michael Pollan but still pull into the drive-through at McDonald's? [74]

I believe all of us sit at this crossroad. Studying *habitus* gives us a bird's-eye view to our own behaviour, personally and culturally, and reveals where work is still needed. We are invited to engage a new *habitus*, one influenced and ordered by the Christian worldview of Christ's sacrificial gift that we might be gifts for each other in community [75]. For many food theologians, to create a new *habitus* informed by eucharistic eating might look like a modern interpretation of religious dietary law "prayerfully chosen—for instance, not eating chickens that were unjustly raised and processed, or eating close to the source of local supply," [76] or choosing the discipline of eating seasonally. The message of food and theology is to be aware of your *habitus*, be aware of your ethics and values, and do everything in your power to act with integrity, *habitus* informed by and following faith. Will this make a difference? Smith, following Bourdieu, answers

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Practical Theology, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Wiley-Blackwell (Firm), Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.

[74] James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, Cultural Liturgies, v. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2013), 8-9.

[75] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 153.

[76] Jung, *Food for Life*, 111. There is an interesting problem brought up by insistence on locally produced food. What about food that can only grow in climates vastly different than Canada, for example, anything tropical? Each person must wrestle with these questions, investigate the possibilities (greenhouses?) and come to their own conclusions.

affirmatively: "what appear to be 'micropractices' have macro effects: what might appear to be inconsequential microhabits are, in fact, disciplinary formations that begin to reconfigure our relation to the wider world—indeed they begin to *make* that world." [77]

The application to a spirituality of feasting is basic. A feast is a meal set apart from quotidian eating, so engaging in best practice is essential. When you create a feast, do what you can to be involved in sustainable agriculture. Seek out food direct from a farmer's market and find the honourably raised chicken, pig, cow, lamb, or fish. Eschew overly processed food and make it from scratch yourself. Regular spiritual feasting is an opportunity to engage in worshipful *habitus*. Beyond food preparation, the ecumenical application for spiritual feasting is simple but powerful; the shared act of eating and drinking re-orients our desires, allowing God's incarnational truth to seep into our core, to help us know "Emmanuel," God with us. This is a form of "saying grace" again and again that moves beyond table prayers and invites "one another to relax into the gracious love of God, trusting that Jesus, who ate with tax collectors and prostitutes, would and does gladly eat with us." [78]

Interdisciplinary Approach

The benefits gained in thinking theologically about food will spill over into other areas as well:

> Because food is so central to a way of life, practices of life at table soon prove to implicate every other important Christian practice as well. Hospitality, community, economics, testimony: all of these practices and more—never fully realized, but persistently present as vision, command, and hope—have influenced how Christians eat together. [79]

"Because of food's multi-sensorial properties of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell, it has the ability to communicate in a variety of registers and constitutes a form of language." [80] Food as language has the ability to communicate group distinctiveness, gender roles, class divisions, power relations, and diverse regional differences [81]. This

[77] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 143.
[78] Bass, "Eating," 5.
[79] Bass, 7.
[80] Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds., *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10. Quoted from Roland Barthes' essay "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption."
[81] Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, 170.

language of food has overlapping components. First, it is related to the interwoven web of food spheres of life that it touches. The habitual ways that food is brought to the table, including farming practice and the sale of food, and the consumption of food are recognized as culturally embedded, described as "foodways" by anthropology [82]. More than that, "food communicates class, ethnic group, lifestyle affiliation, and other social positions. Eating is usually a social matter, and people eat every day. Thus, food is available for management as a way of showing the world many things about the eater." [83]

"The eater" sounds clinical and distant and is appropriate to anthropology. But in theological terms, "the eater" is more personal; the eater is you and me. We are human bodies, flesh and blood, loved by God. A theological approach to food as language looks to these spiritual realities. Food, in this sense, is actual comestible but also spiritual sustenance received around a table. Food is a language that God speaks to communicate God's goodness. Belasco notices that food enchants, and he marvels at the "almost magical way that food reveals identities and creates relationships." [84] This is part of God's food language. Food expresses a relationship and points to a covenant relationship between God and humanity, implicit in creation and discovered through supportive, encouraging human relationships. Eating together builds solidarity in the covenant community, reminding us that "Christ is bread for all peoples and welcomes all to the table equally [85].

Historical Grounding: Early Christian Worship

A spirituality of feasting finds its historical ground in early Christian worship practices. As Hal Taussig [86] and Dennis Smith [87] have explored, the Hellenistic "association meal" was the sole format of early Christian worship. Although we cannot know exactly what happened at these meals,[88] we know that groups across the Hellenized

[82] Counihan and Van Esterik, *Food and Culture*. This reader outlines the various expressions of foodways from many different points of view.
[83] E. N. Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture*, Second edition (New York and London: New York University Press, 2014), 171.
[84] Belasco, *Food*, 13.
[85] Jung, *Food for Life*, 123.
[86] Hal Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).
[87] Dennis Edwin Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).
[88] Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal*, 44.

world met regularly [89] in a ritual format to eat bread and drink wine together, in that order, and with specific prayers for each section of the meal [90]. The meal, called the *deipnon*, was usually bread, probably some fermented fish, some vegetables, and, if the day was right, some meat purchased or gifted from the local deity's altar sacrifice.

The second part of the Hellenistic associative meal was called the *symposion*, and it began with a libation [91] and was dedicated to drinking wine together. For some Hellenistic associative groups this meant wine flinging games, flute girls, and other raucous behaviour. For others, it meant an opportunity for philosophical discussion or oratory aided by the expansive effects of wine on the intellect [92]. I, along with others who look at the importance and effects of wine on a meal, do not advocate excessive consumption. The joy of wine comes from appreciation for its effects on conviviality (Capon); for another avenue to consider how sunlight is turned through soil and leaf into fruit and then, through skill of vintners, to wine (Wirzba); and for the intensely local experience of terroir and the shared, family effort it takes to bring a bottle of wine to the table (Kreglinger). Taussig and Smith suppose the Christian tradition grew out of the second *symposion* tradition. By the time Christianity became the imperial religion of Emperor Constantine, the Hellenistic meal was disappearing [93]. There were too many worshippers to fit into a *symposion* dining room. The couches that diners used to recline on, facing each other, turned to chairs facing forward. The serving table at the centre turned to an altar at the front. The elements of bread and wine became not a meal but tokens of the associative meal and symbols for Jesus' body and blood [94]. The host of the associative meal, who may or may not have been the group leader, over time became the leader of the church and eventually the ordained priest.

Love Feasts

Paul Fike Stutzman investigates the Biblical texts, Church

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[89] Taussig, 22–3.
[90] Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 27–38.
[91] Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal*, 74–5.
[92] Taussig, 82.
[93] Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 279–87.
[94] John Raymond Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000-1500: A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 2 (Peterborough, Ont., Canada ; Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1997), 7. The Lateran Council of 1215 identified for the first time the Catholic Eucharistic theology of transubstantiation, noted by Shinners. There was considerable variation in theology up to that time and even after the canon was enacted.

Fathers' commentary, and texts from the Didache to shed light the early Church's eucharistic practice. Around the time of Constantine, there was an evening meal called the "Love Feast," where believers gathered in a home or rented space to eat and worship together. The Christian Love Feast focused on spiritual inbreaking of the Kingdom, characterized by righteousness, peace, unity, and joy. It followed the format of foot washing as a discipline to emphasize humility, confession to God for purity of believer, praying together, sharing the Eucharist (for the baptized only), eating together potluck-style, and greeting each other with a holy kiss (as a symbol of peace between believers). Leftovers were gathered and shared with the needy. Following this, scripture reading and singing continued the worship. As this tradition began to shift to Sunday morning, the meal and foot washing fell away [95].

The Love Feast experienced a resurgence after the Reformation in Anabaptist communities, specifically in the Brethren traditions beginning in the early eighteenth centuries. Often these feasts were held beginning on the Saturday before Pentecost [96]. By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, many of representatives of these groups, like the Brethren in Christ, had emigrated to North America. The Love Feast now meant gathering in a large group where, over the course of two days, foot washing, communion, shared meals, and an extended time of preaching and teaching took place. It was considered an expression of "embodied faith…as belief was experienced through the body." [97] Pastors warned their parishioners not to conflate the love feast with the Last Supper, emphasizing that Communion was instituted by Christ while the Love Feast, even though it "articulated its 'gustatory theology' through a language of feasting an commensality" was created by humans and was not a sacrament (especially important to a branch of Christianity which is nonsacramental) [98]. This is fair warning for practitioners of spiritual feasting as well. The point is not to replace existing Communion worship but to find Christ present in all experiences, including eating and feasting. Some of the Amana Society, the Moravians, and the Brethren continue the Love Feast tradition to

[95] Paul Fike Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast: Broadening Our Eucharistic Celebrations* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 85–125.
[96] Stutzman, 156–80.
[97] Heidi Oberholtzer Lee, "Commensality and Love Feast: The Agape Meal in the Late Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth-Century Brethren in Christ Church," in *Food and Faith in Christian Culture*, ed. Ken Albala and Trudy Eden, Arts and Traditions of the Table (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3-4, 16.
[98] Oberholtzer Lee, 6-7.

this day [99]

Dinner Church

As modern Christians look to the early Christian example, many have experienced a revelation. If the early church met in a meal format only, then, in the spirit of the theological question of "what would Jesus do?", why are we not doing the same today? There are churches who have switched to a model of worship, often called Dinner Church, where the meal itself is considered the worship. Modern bodies are hungry to know God's grace in a material sense and the visceral nature of dinner church addresses that need. Some dinner churches choose a more defined liturgy, St Lydia's in Brooklyn, NY, for example [100], while others have a very relaxed approach, the only liturgy being a eucharistic moment and a brief table group discussion of a Biblical passage while eating.

To adopt an early church worship format allows worshipers to have a sense of connection with spiritual forebears. Enjoying a Eucharistic moment that is not a wafer reminiscent of Styrofoam and a sip of grape juice but is instead a full meal shared around a table with real bread and wine nourishes our spirit in ways a traditional Eucharist points to but does not do. Some denominations may see Dinner Church as a demotion of the adoration of Christ, reducing a cherished worship ceremony to a humble shared table. But this is precisely what Dinner Church wants. Dinner Church groups meet weekly, so the meal they serve is quotidian: soup and bread made by the worshipping body and shared together in a church hall or other rented space. It is necessary to have simple food that nourishes regularly because deep connections to others do not develop without regular contact. God's love is not only evident at a festal table; God's love is poured out for all every day of the year. For an ecumenical community, it is no different. Regular contact with each other, perhaps in the form of spiritual feasting, could foster openness and depth of empathy and understanding between denominations.

Retrieval of these meaningful practices and traditions requires careful consideration. A practitioner should be able to defend his or her reasons for choosing one practice over the other, have an awareness of the original purpose and history, and explain how a retrieval helps our

[99] Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast*, 170–73.
[100] "St Lydia's," 2021, http://stlydias.org/. The "learn" page on this website features a download-able liturgy for Dinner Churches to follow.

current situation [101]. Feasting does not abandon eucharistic practice in a corporate worship setting but it offers a retrieval of ancient practice that I believe has genuine transformative power because it is an embodied practice and it offers the possibility of a deep personal connection to others and by way of reflection, to God.

Theology of Hospitality

A theology of hospitality knows at its heart that God meets people through acts of service in fellowship. The author of Luke and Acts assigns extraordinary prominence to the place of meals [102], which is instructive for both a theology of food and a spirituality of feasting. Jesus' persistent attention to food, drink, and hospitality conveys something important about the reciprocal relationships between God and human beings, as food theologians corroborate. Underneath Jesus' hospitality imagery is a magnanimous God, who constantly grants far more than humans need or deserve (Matt. 5:43-48) [103]. John Koenig's analysis reveals that God has woven into the very fabric of our lives a "secret abundance" revealed to us when we seek to form partnerships for the kingdom forged around a festal table [104]. Dietrich Bonhoeffer also speaks to the reciprocity between God and humans. Referencing Matthew 10:40-42, he holds that those who bear Jesus words also are bearers of the presence of Christ. Therefore, each service believers do for each other, they do for Christ [105]. We bear Christ's presence, serving each other and thereby serving Christ; we bring Christ to the table and God's abundance is present. Bass agrees: "The Lord's table discloses the abundance at the heart of all that is, inviting us to experience the world and ourselves as God's new creation. Here we may learn to see, even in this hurting world, the abundance of an overflowing cup enjoyed in the presence of enemies (Ps. 23:5); the abundance of a life poured out for the sake of the world; and the abundance of mercy that makes possible a community of hope drawn from every nation." [106]

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[101] McCarthy, 203-4.

[102] John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*, Overtures to Biblical Theology 17 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 88.

[103] Koenig, 28–9.

[104] Koenig, 130–31.

[105] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 2018, 159, http://www.myilibrary.com?id=894520.

[106] Bass, "Eating," 7.

Ecumenical Call to Spiritual Feasting

A spiritual practice of feasting, then, is one that needs to be aware of its own traditions, one that transmits values, and one that embodies faithful responses to the current situation of the practitioners. Feasting together offers a liminal experience, a threshold, or a half-opened door into holy spaces [107]. Finding those in need of grace, our brothers and sisters in Christ, around the table means experiencing the abundant love of God, poured out for all. I believe it is an ecumenical effort applicable to all Christians.

I humbly suggest there are five times in the church calendar to practice a spiritual feast: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Maundy Thursday, Easter, and at Pentecost. However, there is certainly room to host a spiritual feast on any occasion, perhaps during ecumenical conferences or as part of a city-wide ecumenical movement.

The pointed conversation and/or liturgy for the feast will be different depending on the church season. Conversation should flow around the normal sorts of things that everyday people talk about: work, friends, family, politics, things they have seen or heard the past week, both in media and in reality. These natural and normal conversations are part of what builds relationship and intimacy. It is a matter of finding an opening to ask the deeper questions of faith.

I highlight the feast of Pentecost because it celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as told in the book of Acts (Acts2). Love Feasts aside, most Christians have no experience of a spiritual feast on this day, which usually falls some time at the end of May or the beginning of June. A pointed conversation may have to do with how we experience the Holy Spirit, which may look considerably different for a Roman Catholic or an Anglican or a Baptist, let alone a Pentecostal. Inviting as diverse a group of believers as possible to the table on this day honours the ecumenical and multicultural experience that the first believers had on the day of Pentecost. Discovering similarities and differences in each other's traditions should prove for ample food for thought.

The theological reflection that the practitioners or worshippers at these feasts take may happen during the feast or afterwards. Prayerful reflection, perhaps following a modified form of Ignatian examen, is the first stage. I also advocate for study on the part of the practitioner. Some topics to investigate may be:

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[107] Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 124. Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal*, 63.

- eucharistic eating and what implication it has for our daily or festal food experiences;
- grace and how it might be embodied around a table;
- how habits create and inform culture and in this context, faith;
- the topics of food and theology, such as sustainable food choices, or the habit of saying grace;
- the overlapping nature of food and how God is present in all parts of creation;
- how our history has informed our current practice; or any combination of these, following food's multivalent presentation.

The theological texts sourced for this study may be of interest for further study. Also, there are many devotional resources available on these topics or around the topic of food. The range of reflection is therefore dictated by personal experience and always looking for theological truth.

Conclusion

A spirituality of feasting is grounded by concepts in food and theology and described through the lens of practical theology. It finds God's overflowing love through relationships built around an abundant table. The abundance of food and drink at the feasting table is an embodied experience of God's grace, that is wide and deep, more than we can ask or imagine. The practice of feasting offers an opportunity to reflect: the food and drink, the skill of the chef, the hospitality of the host, and the depth of friendship discovered through eating and drinking are simple in themselves but add up to a joyful experience more than the sum of its parts. Reflection on how God moves through this experience is what makes feasting spiritual.

Food theology challenges us to think eucharistically about eating. This entails discussion of sin in the world and grace, re-orienting us to turn towards sustainable food choices. The values of food and theology are choosing sustainable food, saying grace, and sharing food with others. These habits dovetail with a theology of hospitality, where gifts of service and inclusion of the outsider are key practices, based on biblical example. These are habits adopted in a spirituality of feasting. I believe the practice of spiritual feasting is one that will benefit Christians of all denominations.

> Gathered around a table, inspired by and abiding with Christ, people live out the movements of sacrificial self-offering, grateful reception, and reconciled relationships. If this is true, then it is also

the case that people do not ever merely taste bread and wine. Properly transformed and directed, they also taste heaven. They gain a glimpse of life in its grace, fullness and truth. [108]

[108] Wirzba, *Food and Faith,* 233–34.

Recovering Tradition and Post-Christian Thought: The Foundational Contrast and Journeys of John Paul II and Mary Daly's Hermeneutics

Matthew Shanahan

THE CREATION ACCOUNTS of Genesis provide the foundations from which western culture has developed its views on human nature and sexuality. The creation accounts are furthered by the Christian theological development of proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the new Adam, to redeem humanity of its sins. Relying heavily upon the influence of St. Paul, the Marian and Petrine dimensions of the Church were developed as Christians began to make theological sense of the Jesus story, particularly His resurrection. Two theologians will be illustrated at the forefront of the debate on human nature and sexuality. John Paul II and Mary Daly developed radically different hermeneutics, though both having begun in the Catholic tradition. One can be characterized as using modernity as a way to rediscover the depths of human experience in John Paul II with his 'Theology of the Body', not through his own personal hermeneutic in particular but as the Magisterial head of the Church. Daly's journey, on the other hand, involves an uncovering of patriarchal oppression both within the texts and the continuous theological development of Catholic tradition. Looking particularly at her book *Gyn/Ecology: Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, Daly's hermeneutic is the result of deconstructing the patriarchal narratives that constantly seek to control and oppress women. Her goal is to rediscover the essence of femaleness that has

been repressed throughout history, allowing freedom to reign and ultimately, for women to flourish.

In the western world of modernity and beyond, religious traditions are continuously evolving and must be up to task of interpreting its texts in such a way that the tradition stays relevant, speaking to the fullest depths of human experience. John Paul II's'Theology of the Body' comprises of the 129 weekly audiences given in St Peter's Square and the Paul VI Audience Hall between September 5, 1979, and November 28, 1984. This analysis of human sexuality illustrates the evolution of the Catholic theological method on human sexuality in light of biblical texts, theological anthropology, eschatology, and sacramentality. John Paul II interpreted biblical texts with the assistance of insights from a personalist philosophy in order to search for essentially human experiences that differentiate man from the rest of the natural world. The search for the depths of human experience is certainly a point of commonality between Daly and John Paul II, however the Church's views on the complementarity between men and women became irreconcilable for Daly.

John Paul II begins with the tradition in Genesis in order to begin to understand the depths of human experience. God orders man to subdue and have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28). This narrative illustrates man's likeness to God, having been created in His image, willing humanity's existence in a particular way unlike the rest of the creatures [1]. This doctrine thus forbids the possibility of reducing humanity to 'the world' [2]. 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good'. (Genesis 1:31) This has established a foundational base for the tradition's metaphysics, anthropology and ethics of relating the good to humanity's being [3].

This begs the question, what is the purpose of this revelation? Paul Ricoeur claims that the goal is to establish that 'evil has a radical origin, distinct from the more primitive source of the goodness of things'; Mircea Eliade notes that this structure of reality cannot be uncovered by rational and empirical means; rather, it becomes a category that enables humanity to attain transcendental reality. In essence, an 'autonomous and creative act' of the human spirit helps to realize revelation [4]. This revelation speaks of man's history, 'rooted in

[1] John Paul II. "General Audiences: John Paul II's Theology of the Body." John Paul II's Theology of the Body, 2.3.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2.4
[3] *Ibid.*, 2.5
[4] *Ibid.*, 3, notes.

revealed theological prehistory' [5]. This myth is an archaic way of expressing profound

truth, discovered under the layer of this ancient narrative [6].

The result of this prehistory was not for Adam to discover the similarities between himself and the animals, but that he was 'alone'. In sum, he perceived human experience as lacking [7]. John Paul II considers the idea of woman being made with the rib that God took from man to be an 'archaic, metaphorical and figurative way' of expressing this 'homogeneous' reality of being [8]. Both masculinity and femininity in its deepest forms are expressed through each other [9]. Their conjugal union contains a 'particular consciousness of the meaning of their bodies through mutual self-giving'; every union renews the mystery of creation in all its 'original depth and power' [10]. Herein lies the essence of John Paul II's personalist philosophy in understanding the theology of the human body: 'The conjugal act expresses the person in his/her ontological and existential concreteness, beyond the individual. The body expresses the human self, deriving its exterior perception from within' [11]. This affirms what God said regarding man not being alone. Man's full essence is realized not only by existing with, but for someone [12].

As Christopher West, a renowned Catholic author and speaker known for his work on Theology of the Body claims in one of his books on the subject, 'the union of the sexes, as always, lies at the basis of the human order of love' [13]. The first humans, prior to the shame brought about by original sin, are both truly 'naked' because they are 'free with the gift of creation, endowed by their masculinity and femininity' [14]. Both men and women's bodies don't make sense by themselves. However, sexual difference reveals God's plan illustrated in natural law, that 'man and woman are meant to be a gift to one another' [15]. The first humans, yet uncorrupted by sin, had true freedom. This freedom

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[5] *Ibid.*, 4.2.
[6] *Ibid.*, 8.2
[7] *Ibid.*, 6.3.
[8] *Ibid.*, 8.4.
[9] *Ibid.*, 10.1.
[10] *Ibid.*, 10.4.
[11] *Ibid.*, 12.4.
[12] *Ibid.*, 14.2.
[13] Christopher West. *Theology of the Body for Beginners: a Basic Introduction to Pope John Paul II's Sexual Revolution* (West Chester: Ascension Press, 2004), 2.
[14] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 15.1.
[15] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 29.

ought to be understood as the 'mastery of oneself'. Through this, he may 'become a gift, discover his true self and thus sincerely give of himself to the other' [16]. This innocence made it impossible to objectify the other person [17].

The mystery of both masculinity and femininity, as well as the meaning of the body, are revealed in the procreative process; the conjugal union and its fruit of new human life. Their living image is revealed through their newborn child [18]. However, the woman is more 'fully aware of the mystery of creation' within her feminine consciousness through the bearing of the child, as her fruit but also of the 'creative participation that God has in human generation' [19].

The act of original sin corrupted this ideal state of masculinity and femininity revealed in perfect harmony. 'Man turns his back on God', cutting himself off from spiritual gifts, leaving him only what 'is of this world' [20]. It's as though they have forgotten that they are in the presence of God and 'grasp at their own happiness' [21]. This has a profound impact on the spiritual state of the body for all humanity going forward. Subordination of the body to the spirit no longer exists, and constantly resists the spirit. Lust specifically causes a 'major threat' to 'self-mastery and control', which are cornerstones of human freedom [22]. When man's freedom fails, he is no better than the animal [23]. It is also in this way that shame united with lust creates an impulse for men to dominate women [24]. West claims:

> Shame, therefore, has a double meaning. It indicates that they've lost sight of the nuptial meaning of their bodies (God's plan of love stamped in their sexuality) but it also indicates an inherent need to protect the nuptial meaning of the body from the degradation of lust. [25]

Lust reduces 'the original fullness God intended for sexual desire' [26]. This paves the way for a deeper understanding of how Jesus

[16] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 15.2.
[17] *Ibid.*, 18.1.
[18] *Ibid.*, 21.4.
[19] *Ibid.*, 21.6.
[20] *Ibid.*, 26.4.
[21] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 36.
[22] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 28.3.
[23] *Ibid.*, 28.4
[24] *Ibid.*, 31.3.
[25] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 37.
[26] *Ibid.*, 38.

Christ recognized the state of fallen humanity, in light of Jewish tradition at the time of his earthly life. He saw the contradiction of Jewish matrimonial law in all its problems, including harsher punishment for women [27]. He explicitly condemned divorce as it is a 'clear separation of the meaning of the body' between two who have already become one flesh [28]. 'I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart'. (Matthew 5:28) Lust aims only to satisfy the sexual need of the body, causing the other to no longer exist as a form of 'eternal attraction'; creating a 'deep inner separation' [29].29 Breaking away from the lust that led to matrimonial problems within his contemporary Jewish tradition is something Jesus hoped for in what followed to be the Christian tradition.

While Theology of the Body is written for Christians everywhere, its urgency is certainly aimed at a renewal of a Christian culture deeply affected by the cultural and sexual revolution of the 1960's. The older generations of Christians were often silent or, at the very least, promoted 'the incomplete 'don't do it' mantra' that West claims was the primary reason for western

culture to completely abandon 'the authentic Christian teaching on sex' [30]. Daly and the majority of western society would probably wonder, did any society as a whole ever truly grasp the authentic Christian teaching on sex? And did the Church ever promote it in a holistic way?

If analysis were to stop at this point, it would result in a thoroughly bleak picture of human nature and sexuality. The reality of redemption in Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection allows man to further grasp his sexual destiny with a leap of faith, aiming to return as close as possible to his original state of innocence. It is precisely on this point where perceived 'irreversible suspicions' of human destiny believed by the likes of Nietzsche and Freud end, and where the Christian promise of faith in human sexuality as fundamentally good, begins [31]. Some may scoff at this notion, appearing on the surface as a 'God of the Gaps' argument. However, the Catholic tradition, steeped in the knowledge of a plethora of disciplines, knows this is not the case and embodies the flourishing of

[27] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 36.1.
[28] *Ibid.*, 39.5.
[29] *Ibid.*, 40.5.
[30] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 15.
[31] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 46.4.

the theological discipline, from prehistoric myths understanding the origins of man to the historic Christ events and into the present day. Thus, creating a true 'study of God'.

The ability to 'master the lust of the body' comes as a result of the 'interior gift of freedom' endowed by God [32]. Spiritual maturity in this context is the 'fruit of discerning one's impulses of the heart' [33]. If we can't say no to certain food we like, we won't magically be able to say no to lust. The tradition has always maintained that fasting is an important spiritual practice, and a great way to be able to control one's passions. In due time, sexual desire radically transforms into 'the power to love in God's image' [34]. Liberation from lust allows spouses to 'express the language of the body in a depth, simplicity, and beauty hitherto altogether unknown' [35]. None of this would be possible for man to accomplish without grace, which John Paul II describes as 'God's mysterious gift to the human heart that enables men and women to live in the mutual and sincere gift of self' [36].

Deeper theological development of the body from biblical texts finds core doctrine in the letters of Paul (1 Th 4:3-5):

> This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour, not in the passion of lust like heathens who do not know God.

This description of the Christian virtue of purity in its deepest essence achieves an understanding of the naked human body as a 'revelation of God's plan of love' [37]. Constant 'indwelling' of the Holy Spirit provides man with the supernatural power to combat lust, and further dignify the human body [38]. This of course is the result of the resurrection, furthering the idea that man's happiness cannot be accomplished with the soul being 'separated from the body' [39]. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: 'God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that

[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*, 48.2.
[34] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 50.
[35] *Ibid.*, 111.
[36] *Ibid.*, 42.
[37] *Ibid.*, 47.
[38] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 56.3.
[39] *Ibid.*, 66.5.

exchange' [40].

John Paul II also develops his Theology of the Body regarding 'continence' for the kingdom of heaven, as it is the life that he and many other religious have chosen as a particular vocation throughout the centuries. It is a sign that the body is 'directed to glorification', in 'anticipation of the future resurrection' [41]. Indeed, it is a profound imitation of the celibate life Jesus Christ lived on earth. Through this imitation, man can 'fulfill himself differently', by becoming a gift to the Church, not just his wife [42].

The theological model of Christ and the Church is continuously imitated by masculinity and femininity, developed in a clear way by John Paul II:

> In this description the Church-Body of Christ appears clearly as the second subject of the spousal union to which the first subject, Christ, manifests the love with which he has loved her by giving himself for her. That love is an image and above all a model of the love which the husband should show to his wife in marriage, when the two are subject to each other 'out of reverence for Christ. [43]

When we abandon this heavenly model, the carnal pleasures of the sexual union become our 'ultimate fulfillment'.44 Beyond that, looking to our significant other as our ultimate fulfillment will only end in disappointment. 'Only the eternal, ecstatic marriage of heaven' [44] which is so incredible beyond human comprehension is what can 'satisfy the human ache of solitude' [45].

The last part of John Paul II's Theology of the Body focuses on the modern issues that affect the Church's understanding of Her sacred doctrine. West asserts that the sexual revolution of the 1960's could have only occurred because of the 'nearly universal acceptance of contraception' [46]. 'When we divorce sex from its natural orientation toward new life, what is left to prevent the justification of any and every means to sexual climax?' [47]. This constitutes a brief introduction into the multitude of reasons why the Church, despite strong pushback from the culture and even bishops at the time, holds firm to its position

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[40] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd ed (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), 221.
[41] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 75.1.
[42] *Ibid.*, 77.2.
[43] *Ibid.*, 91.4.
[44] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 56.
[45] *Ibid.*, 58.
[46] *Ibid.*, 98.
[47] *Ibid.*, 97.

forbidding artificial contraception. In probably the most controversial Church document of the 20th century, Pope Paul VI states in Humanae Vitae that there cannot be 'impairment of its natural capacity to procreate human life' in the conjugal act [48]. Good intention is not enough. Objective natural law derived from understanding human nature and action must respect the 'total meaning of mutual self-giving' and procreation in the context of true love, which can only be accomplished by practicing the virtue of 'married chastity'. In Gaudium Et Spes, Pope Paul VI states that through this virtue they may use natural family planning which can control birth without 'offending moral principles' [49].49 By sterilizing sex, we try to become the masters of our own destiny 'and make ourselves like God' just as the first humans did in the garden of Eden [50].

The Church maintains however, that its theology is not devoid of practical application. Individuals should make family planning decisions regarding what is best for them and for their children, both materially and spiritually, with an eye on the future. This is done by acting 'according to their conscience conformed to the law of God' [51]. The primary difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception is their 'intrinsic ethical character' [52] :

> The theology of the body is not merely a theory, but rather a specific, evangelical, Christian pedagogy of the body. This derives from the character of the Bible, and especially of the Gospel. As the message of salvation, it reveals man's true good, for the purpose of modeling—according to the measure of this good—man's earthly life in the perspective of the hope of the future world. [53]

Going forward it is up to the Christian, versed in the Theology of the Body, not to condemn those who live their sexuality in all sorts of corrupted and improper ways, but to help people 'untwist' their misdirected desires and begin to direct them towards God's plan of love [54]. The text is also undoubtedly about renewal. This text contains deep truths about humanity that have failed to be explained adequately for much too long, and certainly remains a contributing factor for why many western countries today are often defined as 'Post-Christian'.

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[48] Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae*, 11.
[49] Paul VI. *Gaudium et Spes*, 51.
[50] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 109.
[51] Paul VI. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.
[52] John Paul II, *op. cit.*, 118.2.
[53] *Ibid.*, 118.5.
[54] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 122.

West states that without a 'renewal of marriage and the family', the Church cannot renew Herself and fulfill Her mission effectively [55].

In her 1978 book Gyn/Ecology- Metaethics for Radical Feminism, Mary Daly prefaces her text by iterating the need for immediate deconstruction of language within the world's patriarchal religions, including Christianity no doubt. While the Christian faith tends to focus on an anthropomorphic approach in describing and contemplating the search for God, Daly writes and speaks 'gynomorphically' because the imagery of God is 'male-dominated' [56]. Rather, the spiritual search for 'Goddess' affirms 'women and nature being full of life and love as authentic beings' [57].

Just as John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body' roots its interpretation in the myth of the Fall, so does Daly in her unique, developing radical feminist methodology. Similarly, Daly affirms that the Fall contains knowledge about humanity, but seeks to connect the truths of connectedness within 'artificially separated reality, distorted by patriarchal oppression, falling short of the ultimate reality of truth, particularly for women' [58].

Thus, the rough journeying to what Daly terms the 'Other Side' begins. Radical feminist consciousness draws on knowledge from the past, while creating the present and future [59]. As previously mentioned, Daly asserts that the term God in the Christian world is too heavily steeped in a male-dominated tradition for revival. The tradition has been distorted through patriarchal oppression and the fruits of knowledge within the myth of the Fall have been appropriated to be used solely for the benefit of men:

> God the 'Father' is precisely the one who cannot exorcise. He is allied with and identified with The Possessor. This is not to say that roles need be reversed. It would be a mistake to see men as victims needing to be "saved" through female self-sacrifice. [60]

Daly stresses the significance of prehistory to name the 'prior importance of the interconnected significant events of women's living and dying' [61]. Patriarchy deleting the tradition of female truth 'forces

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[55] *Ibid.*, 117.
[56] Mary Daly. *Gyn/Ecology- The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 2.
[57] *Ibid.*, 2.
[58] *Ibid.*, 3.
[59] *Ibid.*, 7.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*, 21.

women to relearn what their foresisters knew and to repeat their blunders' [62]. Part of the radical feminist call to participate in creation of the present/future is for women to choose their Self, defining it by choice, not in relation to children or men [63].Patriarchal society revolves around 'myths of processions'. Daly elaborates on this notion, stating:

Earthly processions both generate and reflect the image of procession from and return to god the father. Moreover, all creatures proceed from this eternally processing god, who is their Last End, with whom the righteous will be united in eternal bliss. Thus, in this symbol system there is a circular pattern/model for muted existence: separation from and return to the same immutable source...its ultimate symbol of processions is the all-male trinity itself. This trinity excludes all female mythic presence and denies female reality in the Cosmos...Male made-up femininity has nothing to do with women. [64]

It is important to note where the Mother Goddess has been found in some sense throughout myths and religious rituals corrupted by the patriarchy. Daly states that Jesus offering the faithful to eat his body and his blood to drink is playing Mother Goddess, through a 'veiled vampirism' [65]:

> They vampirized the power inherent in the Mother as symbol, naming their persecuting institution "Mother Church". Thus on a mythic/symbolic level they attempted to warp the deepest feelings of women – all of whom are, of course, daughters – snarling these feelings into Self-contradictory love-hate. This Mystical Body, the Church, also known as the 'Bride of Christ', was/is the false 'Mother' used to destroy female-identified Selves. [66]

In that sense, radical feminists are the opposite of the prototypical 'Mary' ideal for women. Our 'prehistoric sources are the anti-Marian Goddesses' journeying in a constant attempt to recover 'fragmented female divinity' [67]. This illustrates the desire to rid society of strong-willed women, to 'kill the Goddess', and the 'divine spark of be-ing in women' [68]. The radical feminist movement proposed by Daly is not linear but rather, as explained above, resembles spiraling, continuing to remember, recall, and reclaim the knowledge gained in the preceding

[62] *Ibid.*, 20.
[63] *Ibid.*, 8.
[64] *Ibid.*, 29.
[65] *Ibid.*, 57.
[66] *Ibid.*, 126.
[67] *Ibid.*, 150.
[68] *Ibid.*, 117.

Passages, assuming this into our present/future [69]:

> The methods are refined to achieve ultimate ownership of female be-ing and power. The techniques are devised to achieve the final solution – prepossession. This is possession before a woman's original movement in be-ing can break through to consciousness. It involves depths of destruction that the term possession cannot adequately name. For someone to be possessed, she must first be. But the point here is precisely that the process of being is broken on the wheel of processions. Prepossession means that be-ing is condensed to a static state, that is frozen. [70]

In her journal article *Revisiting Mary Daly: Her views on Mariology, the Trinity and the Fall as Post-Christian myths*, Hannelie Wood affirms that Daly certainly did not want radical feminism to reject the divine altogether, emphasizing the necessity to 'partake in ultimate reality in order to free themselves from Christian idolatry that has been imposed on them'. Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* book is primarily directed to 'spinsters', who are single women beyond the standard age of marriage. As she grows, the spinster is encouraged by her 'strengthened powers of hearing and seeing' [71]. Female bonding is 'energizing/gynergizing'; in this space the Self 'pledges allegiance to no flag, no cross' [72]. This poses further philosophical questions upon the rejection of religion and patriotism:

> Seeking out the interconnected "whys" unfragmented by the fathers' philosophies, is difficult. This requires hard work, for the categories of Aristotle, of Kant, of ancient myths and contemporary -ologies have shattered the deepest questions, making them seem disparate, unrelated. The questions, such as Why? If? When? Where? How? How come? Why not? - have been frozen. The natural flow among them has been intercepted. Males have posed the questions; they have placed the questions, tagged and labeled, into the glass cases of mental museums. They have hidden the Questions. The task for feminists now is conquestioning, con-questing for the deep sources of the questions, seeking a permanently altering state of consciousness. [73]

Men must see this as a 're-claiming of female heritage'. In this sense, women are no longer seen as men's property because of the

[69] *Ibid.*, 197.
[70] *Ibid.*, 145.
[71] *Ibid.*, 197.
[72] *Ibid.*, 212.
[73] *Ibid.*, 216.

'radical aloneness' that women have achieved in their ability to bond in friendship. Some men are horrified by this realization [74].

Daly refutes the prevailing orthodox idea within the Catholic tradition regarding the complementarity of the sexes. She emphasizes the wholeness of human beings, refusing to believe that two halves form one whole. Masculinity and femininity, which are 'patriarchal constructs', will result in 'delusions of wholeness' [75]. One particular example of this idea permeating into the practice of the tradition is how the Church understands the 'particularity of Jesus' maleness' as being much more important than the 'particularity of his Semitic identity'. This results in the recruitment of priests in such a way that they do not exclude men from the priesthood on the basis of age, race or nationality, but it licenses them to exclude all women. Daly stresses this is 'something women must refuse' [76]. The question of the Virgin Mary's place in Catholicism when it comes to empowering women has continuously been a point of contention among feminists:

> The virgin model in Catholicism is not liberating to women; nuns are still dominated by men and are dominated and confined by the physical, psychological and social powers of patriarchy. The 'Rape of the Goddess' in Christian myth is 'mind/spirit rape'. When Gabriel appeared to Mary (as a terrified young girl), he announced that she had been chosen to become the mother of God; she put up no resistance. This, to Daly, is religious rape. Mary, as the victim, was impregnated with the 'Supreme Seminal Idea', who became the 'Word Made Flesh'. The role of Mary is minimal; she gives unqualified consent, bears the son, adores him, and according to Catholic theology, she was saved by him. [77]

The question of true liberation is most prominent in today's world in relation to thinking about women's rights issues of the day, particularly contraception and abortion. Men have use the distortion of myths throughout history to capitalize upon the 'false conscience/consciousness' that many women have, getting them to confess 'feelings of guilt' and 'desire for a child' which such women 'should' have [78]. Daly was well aware that the birth control pill had its downfalls for women. It can cause a decrease in glucose tolerance,

[74] *Ibid.*, 230.
[75] *Ibid.*, 243.
[76] *Ibid.*, 225.
[77] *Ibid.*, 227.
[78] *Ibid.*, 155.

serious depression, as well as increase the risk of cancer [79]. Relating this issue to economic inequality, Daly claims there was a double standard when it came to poor women, some of which had many kids, and thus society hoped they be 'castrated for the good of society' but refused access to abortion when they so desired [80]. Even within the context of legal abortion, victories are miniscule because they occur in an oppressive and patriarchal social context. This does not ultimately free the female Self but creates hope for better options and for more radical freedom [81]. Contrarily, West states that the abortion debate is not about the patriarchy, freedom, or a scientific view of when life begins but rather 'the meaning of sex'. For West, abortion happens because people have taken the proper meaning out of sex and thus indulge in situations where an unwanted pregnancy becomes a possibility [82].

For Daly, this freedom arises because there are 'no models, no roles, no institutionalized relationships to fall back upon'. This further journey allows her to become 'both her earlier and her present Self' [83]:

> In fact, it is simply the expression/expansion of gynergy for its own sake, and this transcendence of Fury itself is the Renaissance of Fire. In its light, the patriarchal male is forced to see his history of holocausts, to review the multitudes of women sacrificed as burnt offerings to his gods. This is his unbearable "beatific vision", his Last End. [84]

Men's last end helps envision women's new beginning. Her beginning is not to worship a God through procession but to find the 'Goddess within'. Our original sin stems from the patriarchy. We are damaged from the very beginning. This leads to damaging others through the faulty education we've received. The Voyage is 'not one of regaining lost innocence, but of learning Innocence' [85]. This new beginning is recovering from what Daly terms 'Patriarchy's Fall'. The application of this distorted myth has led to women becoming 'the primordial scapegoat' [86].

Without a doubt, Daly's hermeneutic is influenced by her developing negative feelings towards the patriarchy, leading her to alter

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[79] *Ibid.*, 156.
[80] *Ibid.*, 168.
[81] *Ibid.*, 236.
[82] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 14.
[83] Mary Daly, *op. cit.*, 240.
[84] *Ibid.*, 241.
[85] *Ibid.*, 259.
[86] *Ibid.*, 260.

her view of God beyond simply the God/Goddess paradigm. Daly opposed the ideas of God as 'divine omnipotent, divine immutable and divine providence' as well as 'changeless'. This opposition was of course due to her conviction that the Christian view on God was too 'androcentric' [87]. It remained a core reason why she lost faith in the Christian tradition altogether.

In deeply analyzing both John Paul II and Mary Daly's hermeneutics, it is very clear that they both had vastly different journeys. They shared drastically different visions of where a 'post-Christian' culture should direct itself, having both experienced and written in the period that followed the sexual revolution of the 1960's. This decade had a profound impact on Mary Daly, as it was the one where she decided to leave the Christian faith altogether. One of her experiences that led to such a decision was her partaking in one of the sessions at Vatican II. Wood recalls in her text that Daly saw 'a hope that was real but ultimately misplaced' [88] What especially struck her was the silence of women throughout the session who did not feel comfortable in asking questions or sharing opinions but continuously 'expressed their gratitude for the privilege of being present'. It didn't sink into her mind right away, but eventually 'the multileveled message burned its way deep into her consciousness' [89]. A fundamental loss of trust in the institutional Church to change, led Daly wanting all people to direct their energy to 'the self and to others'. This meant that in order for radical change to be accomplished, 'we had to all stop calling ourselves part of the church' [90].

The figure of Jesus has no relevance to liberated women because they 'cannot accept the idea of a redemptive incarnation in the unique form of a male saviour' [91]. Even the Virgin Mary, brought to the elevated human status of veneration is only in that state 'when seen in relation to Jesus' (Wood). One particular aspect of Mariology that Daly praises is the Immaculate Conception. It is liberating because it is independent of any male power, while 'parthenogenetic powers are evoked' [92].However, the assumption of Mary 'reinforces patriarchalism' because it requires the aid of Christ taking her into

[87] *Ibid.*, 263.
[88] Hannelie Wood. Revisiting Mary Daly: Her views on the Trinity, Mariology and the fall as post-Christian myths, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 41, no. 1 (2015), 146.
[89] *Ibid.*, 147.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*, 150.
[92] *Ibid.*, 149.

heaven [93].

The problem with the Fall, while nobly hoping to fully understand the 'tragedy of the human condition', failed because it was a 'male-dominated attempt'. The unfortunate fruits of the myth resulted in 'sexual oppression and bestowed inferiority' for women everywhere (qtd. in Wood). It also paved way from men to rationalize their degradation towards women, but also for women to inwardly fail to value their proper self-worth [94]. This is not to say that Daly rejected the idea of a Fall altogether:

> One could see the myth as prophetic of the real Fall that was yet on its way, dimly glimpsed. In that dreaded event, women reach for knowledge and, finding it, share it with men, so that together we can leave the delusory paradise of false consciousness and alienation. In ripping the image of the Fall from its old context we are also transvaluating it. [95]

Within the contrast of two vastly different hermeneutics, what remains is an attempt to understand the truths and lack of truths present in the human condition and the societies that have formed and live by them. As West states, 'Behind every false god we discover our desire for the true God gone awry' [96] or Goddess, as Daly would no doubt retort.

While Daly has a theological background, her hermeneutics are primarily focused on ways of recovering the power and equality that women have failed to obtain throughout history, as well as uncovering the historical roots of patriarchal faults along the way. John Paul II's hermeneutic is much more theologically ingrained with the Catholic tradition, aimed at understanding human beings in their similarity and complementarity in relation to the divine. Theology of the Body uncovers the human capability for love in light of human truth asserted in biblical texts, interpreted by the Magisterium. Love does not discriminate based on sex, but 'desires to expand its own communion' [97]. Rather than what Daly sees as a forceful divine impregnation of an unwilling teenager, John Paul II sees the essence of Mary as 'a woman who walked this planet once opened herself so profoundly to God's love that she literally conceived divine life in her

[93] *Ibid.*, 148.
[94] *Ibid.*, 152
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] Christopher West, *op. cit.*, 57.
[97] *Ibid.*, 8.

womb' [98]. Both men and women can only be free when we 'desire what is true, good, and beautiful' which in turn is the 'freedom from the compulsion to grasp and possess' [99]. On the surface, similarity may appear. However, as explained throughout this paper, what is perceived as true, good and beautiful largely differs based on the interpretation of history, equality, myth...etc.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, much criticism has been attributed to him saying 'Wives be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord' (Ephesians 5:22). Interpretation is so crucial and can easily go one way or the other. West asserts:

> Notice that the first thing St. Paul says to spouses is "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" As John Paul II emphasizes, Ephesians 5 calls spouses to a mutual subjection. Those who think St. Paul was simply regurgitating cultural prejudice against women do not understand how countercultural this idea was. [100]

West furthers his interpretation by sympathizing with feminist anger in the sense that we are living 'in a world void of heroic, sacrificial men' [101]. The world of chaos and bad male influences result in a segregation of the sexes, which Daly appears to have no issue with as it helps female 'radical aloneness'. The Church on the other hand, puts forth this ethic of love to both men and women, rooted in a theological understanding of the human body. The model for men and women in marriage to imitate Christ and the Church is at the core of Her teaching. If this imitation of love is not followed, 'marriage can sink quite quickly into a form of oppression, especially for women' [102]. Above all else, it is about refuting the ideas of power, control and domination as the cornerstones of any marriage. They are 'the wrong paradigms altogether, regardless of who's the boss' [103].

In conclusion, Daly's hermeneutic is the result of deconstructing the patriarchal narratives that constantly seek to control and oppress women. Her goal is to rediscover the essence of femaleness that has been repressed throughout history, allowing freedom to reign and ultimately, for women to flourish. She further uncovers patriarchal oppression within biblical texts and continuous theological development of Catholic tradition, creating a deep contrast and divide

[98] *Ibid.*, 10.
[99] *Ibid.*, 42.
[100] *Ibid.*, 81.
[101] *Ibid.*, 83.
[102] *Ibid.*, 84.
[103] *Ibid.*

with John Paul II's hermeneutic. His Theology of the Body illustrates the evolution of the Catholic theological method on human sexuality in light of biblical texts, theological anthropology, eschatology, and sacramentality. His personalist philosophy builds on the uniqueness and depth of each person in order to search for essentially human experiences that differentiate man from the rest of the natural world. Most importantly, it constitutes a guide on how to love through our sexual nature, leading to ultimate fulfillment and communion with God. Must we continue to constantly deconstruct the patriarchal oppression that lives and breath within our institutions? How can we use wisdom from the world's greatest thinkers in light of this? How can we live our lives in the fullness of truth? These are some of the questions that both Daly and John Paul II have answered with conviction in their hermeneutics.

Wall Building in the "One Nation Under God"; Analyzing Interfaith Implications in Rev. Robert Jeffress' "When God Chooses a Leader"

Zackari Bourgeois

ON JANUARY 20TH, 2017, The Washington Post published an article detailing a Friday morning Sermon given by Rev. Robert Jeffress in honor of then-President-elect Donald Trump entitled "When God Chooses A Leader" [1]. While Jeffress had previously stated to Fox News that the sermon was to explain why God chooses a leader, controversy mounted over what appeared to be Jeffress establishing Biblical precedence for Donald Trump's border wall. The backlash from certain Christian and Jewish media outlets alike questioned the use of scripture for political means, while conservative commentators of both faiths applauded Jeffress' work. As such, this paper seeks to analyze Jeffress' sermon through an interfaith lens using a twofold methodology of "When God Chooses a Leader". The socio-historical context will demonstrate three converging movements which aid in a more nuanced understanding of Jeffress' sermon. First, Jeffress' use of Nehemiah will be placed within Christian Zionist discourse, followed by a discussion

[1] Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "'God Is Not Against Building Walls!' The Sermon Trump Heard From Robert Jeffress Before His Inauguration," The Washington Post (WP Company, January 20, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/01/20/god-is-not-against-building-walls-the-sermon-donald-trump-heard-before-his-inauguration/.
NOTE: The transcript of the sermon used for this analysis was provided through the same source.

on the goals of Christian Zionism and its impact on Evangelical-Jewish relations around the time of Trump's inauguration. Second, the socio-historical context will show Jeffress' Trump-Nehemiah connection as having historical precedence through what James M. Patterson calls the "American nehemiad". This will then question the concept of success vs failure in the Book of Nehemiah and how specific publications touched on this issue in Jeffress's sermon. Lastly, an analysis of "wall" politics will shed light on the symbolic nature of Trump's Border Wall and the possible interfaith implications of such politics. The textual analysis relies on two different forms of analysis: linguistic and intertextual. The textual analysis of Jeffress' sermon will reveal two distinctive features of the sermon: shifts in the syntactic use of God and in the language used to define in-groups and out-groups. Ultimately, this research will display how Jeffress' sermon has negative implications on the standing of the Jewish people within contemporary U.S society.

1. The Socio-Historical Context

1.1 Who's God Is It Anyway? Christian Zionism, Its Discursive Tools and the Rise of the Judaic Right in America

Within Jeffress' sermon, there is no outright call to Judaism. The sermon itself does not embark in interfaith discourse; yet interfaith discourse both informs the sermon's ideology, and its reception. First, Jeffress' sermon is steeped in Christian Zionist ideology. Christian Zionism is an ideology popular among American Evangelicals which believes a one-state solution for Israel is in line with biblical prophecy [2]. As an interfaith dialogue between certain sects of Evangelicalism and Judaism, Christian Zionism represents an Evangelical movement to fix the transgressions committed against Israel's people [3]. With the founding of the Christians United for Israel (CUFI), this movement has attempted and somewhat succeeded in influencing U.S. foreign policy within the Middle East through such moves as the U.S. Embassy moving to Jerusalem [4]. Christian Zionists like Jeffress heralded the

[2] Sean Durbin, "From King Cyrus To Queen Esther: Christian Zionists' Discursive Construction of Donald Trump As God's Instrument," *Critical Research on Religion* 8, no. 2 (2020): 117-18.

[3] Dan Hummel, "Christian Zionism: The Interfaith Movement Hiding In Plain Sight," Aeon (Aeon Magazine, September 26, 2018), https://aeon.co/essays/christian-zionism-the-interfaith-movement-hiding-in-plain-sight.

[4] Mimi Kirk, "Countering Christian Zionism In The Age Of Trump," MERIP,

endeavor himself, even giving a quite controversial sermon at the embassy's opening[5]. Notable Israeli publications like the *Jerusalem Post* called on Israelites happy with the U.S. Embassy move to thank Christian Zionists, with Tuly Weisz stating "it is evangelical Christians who are standing with Israel today in ways that Nehemiah never could have dreamed about" [6]. Christian Zionists, with the election of Trump, gained considerable media coverage through conservative outlets and political power, most notably, to influence policy [7]. But what are the marks of Christian Zionist discourse, and how does "When God Chooses a Leader" display these tendencies?

Sean Durbin explains a primary rhetorical tool of Evangelical support for Trump, and Christian Zionist discourse; Trump provides features reminiscent of Old Testament leaders, with Cyrus being the most prominent mentioned [8]. This often serves to explain God's reliance on "ordinary human actors as divine instruments", as like King Cyrus, Trump is a secular weapon of the "nation" used to rid itself of its exilic identity [9]. While Durbin's analysis sticks primarily to King Cyrus and Queen Esther, a quick glance through "When God Chooses A Leader" shows Jeffress equally relies on utilizing Nehemiah to explain why God would call on such a person. That is because in Christian Zionist discourse, God's "choosing" of Trump is fueled by an apocalyptic worldview. Durbin notes strong links between the dispensationalist eschatology of modern U.S Evangelicals and Christian Zionism, where the Jewish people are seen as "witnesses" necessary to "Christian truth claims" [10]. Jewish occupation of Israel is vital to Christian Zionist's

August 23, 2019, https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/.

[5] News Agencies and ILH Staff, "Pastor Who Says Jews Go To Hell Should Not Lead Embassy Prayer," Israelhayom.com (Israel Hayom, May 14, 2018), https://www.israelhayom.com/2018/05/14/romney-pastor-who-says-jews-destined-for-hell-should-not-give-embassy-prayer/.

[6] Tuly Weisz, "Time To Start Crediting The Christians," The Jerusalem Post , May 12, 2018, https://www.jpost.com/opinion/time-to-start-crediting-the-christians-556225.

[7] Mimi Kirk, "Countering Christian Zionism In The Age Of Trump," MERIP, August 23, 2019, https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/.

[8] For more on Donald Trump as the new King Cyrus, see Andre Gagne`s

[9] Sean Durbin, "From King Cyrus To Queen Esther: Christian Zionists' Discursive Construction of Donald Trump As God's Instrument," *Critical Research on Religion* 8, no. 2 (2020): 121.

[10] *Ibid.*, 118, 121.

apocalyptic ideology [11]. As God's latest instrument, Trump is seen as the one to take America out of its degraded state after the Obama Administration – an administration which was labeled as "evil", anti-Semitic and a betrayer of Israel [12]. Within this framework, Trump is an interfaith bridge in the discourse between American Evangelicals and Conservative Jews which Christian Zionism created. American Conservative Judaism would play a big part in bolstering pro-Israel foreign policy and anti-immigration domestic policy, for growing within the United States at the time of the 2016 election was a right-wing Evangelical movement and a right-wing Judaic movement.

While not as impressive as the 81% [13] of Evangelicals who voted Republican in the 2016 election, a AJC survey of Orthodox Jews found 54% voted for Trump [14], and this number has only risen since [15]. Much like with Evangelical support for Trump, critics often cite Trump's demeanor as being contradictory to Jewish ideals, yet as Jeremy Sharon states, Orthodox Jewish-Americans have cultivated a pragmatic communal approach to mainstream politics:

> Essentially, the Orthodox approach is one in which policies and the specific good of the community are the main factor in determining political support, and the consideration of issues outside of those parameters is deemed largely irrelevant. [16]

Specifically, Deutsch found that in neighborhoods such as Williamsburg in New York City, a large swath of Hasidic Jews voted for Trump even if the local Yiddish newspaper endorsed Hilary Clinton by evoking the notion of *hakaras ha-tov* (showing gratitude) [17]. The

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[11] *Ibid.*, 118.
[12] *Ibid.*, 122-24.
[13] André Gagné, "Introduction" in *Ces Évangéliques Derrière Trump* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2020), 10-24.
[14] "2017 AJC: Survey of Jewish Public Opinion," Jewishdatabank.org, 2017, https://www.jewishdatabank.org/databank/search-results/study/850.
[15] See Jacob Magid, "Orthodox Jews Back Trump By Massive Margin, Poll Finds," The Times of Israel, October 15, 2020, https://www.timesofisrael.com/orthodox-jews-back-trump-by-massive-margin-poll-finds/.
and Yonat Shimron, "In Voting, Orthodox Jews Are Looking More Like Evangelicals," Religion News Service, February 20, 2021, https://religionnews.com/2021/02/19/the-political-chasm-between-left-and-right-is-tearing-orthodox-jews-apart/.
[16] Jeremy Sharon, "Why Are So Many Orthodox Jews Voting For Trump?," The Jerusalem Post , November 1, 2020, https://www.jpost.com/us-elections/why-are-so-many-orthodox-jews-voting-for-trump-analysis-647681.
[17] Nathaniel Deutsch, "'Borough Park Was a Red State': Trump and the Haredi

2016 election found many Hasidic in metropolitan areas voting much like middle-class white ethnic groups in NYC's outer boroughs and rural Americans across the country [18]. More strikingly, these Hasidic groups broke further away from other "Jewish groups", with many noting the possible socioeconomic factors which distinguish the Haredim from other Jewish Americans, like inequalities in education and median income. With this in mind, the Haredim has found itself more politically conservative and further in line with Evangelicals on more fronts than simply religion. Yet among the most significant changes in the Haredim voting demographic was a stronger connection to Israel and a more favorable opinion of Zionism [19].

The Christian Zionist discourse prevalent during the 2016 election capitalized on mounting conservative Jewish activism. Deutsch found that among the Haredim, opposition to gay marriage and an increased push for school vouchers within the community further bridged political incentives among the Haredim and Evangelical conservatives. One of the top priorities domestically was immigration, with a heightened suspicion of immigration from Muslim countries [20]. Jewish issues with Islam in the Middle East were beginning to conflate themselves with fear of Islamist extremism in America. The necessity for more decisive political action – and a wall – became increasingly attractive to Jewish and Evangelical voters alike. This conflation of foreign and domestic policy can be equally witnessed in ``When God Chooses a Leader`` when Jeffress names terrorists as a direct enemy of the state and, therefore, an essential enemy kept out of Jerusalem by the wall. This was not lost on pro-Trump publications which utilized global issues in Islamic extremism to justify the wall as a proactive step in fighting terrorism. Christian Zionist discourse provided the best outlet for this fear both abroad and at home. Nehemiah was the best available option to present OT precedence for hardline anti-immigration reform [21]. The interfaith implication of Jeffress' utilization of Nehemiah

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Vote," Jewish Social Studies 22, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2017): 161.

[18] *Ibid.*, 163.

[19] *Ibid.*, 164.

[20] *Ibid.*, 165-66.

[21] see Tricia Erickson, "Is Donald Trump God's Nehemiah?," The Forward, September 1, 2016, https://forward.com/scribe/349065/is-donald-trump-gods-nehemiah/.

Erickson summarizes how the threat of domestic terrorism from Islam extremists would necessitate stronger border security – mainly a wall – and justifies Jeffress`Nehemiah-Trump connection to prove her point. It serves as an example of pro-Trump publication`s capacity for turning foreign policy issues *into* domestic

in Christian Zionist discourse is that it showcased where Evangelicals and Conservative Judaism were willing to meet in that precise moment.

1.2 Piousness on Alert; the Idealization of Nehemiah and the Notion of Failure

Nehemiah has had a long-standing relationship with American civil and political discourse. James M. Patterson calls the tradition of using Nehemiah "the American nehemiad". Patterson states the American nehemiad presents unity in piety and patriotism, examples of how to govern with the support of religious leaders, and stresses perseverance and fidelity to the law [22]. The nehemiad presents these features as distinctly "American» and has strong connections to America's founding and the Puritan Experiment. Of significant importance to the nehemiad is its capacity to mix foreign and domestic opposition to the pious and patriotic government [23]. It utilizes Nehemiah's enemies – Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem – to represent the foreign and antireligious and domestic issues within the community itself. In an essay for *Law and Liberty*, Patterson names Jeffress specifically as an inheritor of this American nehemiad, and Patterson analyzes Jeffress` nehemiad sermon to those of the past [24]. In Jeffress` American nehemiad, Patterson sees a heavy reliance on Trump's capacity to face criticism and the obstacles ahead, rather than his piety. Patterson views the sermon as a call for Trump, as the nation's weight is placed upon the 45th president's shoulders. Yet as the subsequent textual analysis will show, the burden of piety is more so put on the nation's shoulders than on Donald Trump's. As Jeffress states near the sermon's end, America needs God; Trump needs to recognize the necessity for God. This paper suggests that Jeffress' underlying theme of failure is informed by a similar theme of failure within the Book of Nehemiah itself, which aids Jeffress in creating a unique form of the nehemiad in how it defines the burden of this responsibility as being carried by the collective nation.

The capacity for failure is built into the Book of Nehemiah. While the nature of the American nehemiad relies on Evangelical understandings of Nehemiah as an idealized leader [25], Biblical scholars,

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policy issues, which is a main theme of this research as is.

[22] James M. Patterson, "The American Nehemiad, or the Tale of Two Walls," *Journal of Church and State* 57, no. 3 (June 2014): 451.

[23] *Ibid.*, 454

[24] James M. Patterson, "American Nehemiad ," Law & Liberty, February 3, 2017, https://lawliberty.org/american-nehemiad/.

[25] Gary E. Schnittjer, "The Bad Ending of Ezra-Nehemiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 173

such as narrative critics, for example, have claimed the failures of Nehemiah's leadership must have been intended for a narrative purpose [26]. Schnittjer claims that the goal of Nehemiah's failures as a leader was to show the continued presence of the exile within the Judean community [27]. For the author-compiler, this was of utmost importance; not that Nehemiah be idealized as a leader, but rather that those reading the Book of Nehemiah during the post-exilic era understand the community's critical role in escaping the spiritual boundaries of exile`. As Schnittjer states, “In each of [the historical book’s] narratives, Israel's God remains faithful to the covenant, and his people rebel against it at every turn” `. While Nehemiah builds the wall, and the community accepts the Torah, by the book's end, Nehemiah is forced to perform a series of harsh reforms due to the community's incapacity to adhere to Mosaic Law. In essence, a leader is just as good as the community who follows him. This places the greater part of the responsibility in the hands of the community, rather than on the shoulders of Nehemiah. The leader is seen as the catalyst but not the absolute answer to adherence issues. Interestingly, Jeffress himself presents Nehemiah as a successful *builder par excellence* yet makes a case for the community's participation through prayer and vote [28]. Jeffress makes it known that for America to succeed, the people must become “Nehemiahs” ` themselves, instead of being the community that continually loses its way, like in the final chapters of the Book of Nehemiah.

Interestingly, criticism of the sermon from Jewish and Christian media outlets centered on a perceived theological and socio-historical misunderstanding of the Book of Nehemiah. None point directly to the “failure” of Nehemiah. For example, Rabbi Barat Ellman called into question the selectivity of Jeffress' sermon in an op-ed for *Forward*. Rabbi Ellman points to Jeffress' dependency on Chapters 1-4, stating Chapter 5 finds Nehemiah addressing the plight of the common people – an address which Rabbi Ellman finds anti-Trumpian. Rabbi Ellman questions Trump's cabinet decisions, noting that Trump's then-nominees, such as Steven Mnuchin and Andrew Puzder, represented the sort of economic plight that Nehemiah attempted to protect the community against [29]. Shawn Casselberry analyzed the Trump-

(January-March 2016): 33-34.

[26] To say Nehemiah exemplifies a certain *failure in leadership* is not to say the Book of Nehemiah itself is a *failure in narrative*.

[27] *Ibid.*, 56.

[28] See Part 3 of “When God Chooses A Leader”.

[29] Barat Ellman, “How Trump's Inaugural Pastor Misread The Bible,” The

Nehemiah connection concerning the border wall, noting two usual circumstances for Nehemiah comparisons. First, it is used in a spiritual context to demonstrate a "rebuilding" of spiritual lives. Second, it has been used by Christian community organizers to demonstrate the need for community investment. In his blog post, Casselberry questions contemporary political uses of Nehemiah in anti-immigration discourses, as in his view, Nehemiah's wall served to protect a minority community, not to keep minorities out [30]. Lastly, Mark D. Williamson addressed the Jeffress sermon in a 2019 article written for *Word & World*. Williamson states that Jeffress makes a simplistic analogy between post-exilic Israel and America, searching for a "Make Israel Great Again" moment within scripture to suit political interests[31]. Yet Williamson makes a case for "wall-building", claiming Nehemiah advocates for means of separation to ensure the community's protection and purity[32]. For Williamson, the Book of Nehemiah's walls are more indicative in a contemporary sense of creating metaphorical walls.

1.3 Contextualizing the Implications: The Symbolism of Trumps Wall and its Relation to Nehemiah's

Of Donald Trump's many campaign promises, one of his most polarizing might have been the border wall, of which many like Jeffress had – and still do – compared to the mission of Nehemiah. Designed to save taxpayers money by infringing on illegal immigrant's capacity to infiltrate the United States, as well as keeping "violent criminals" from entering the country [33], the border wall became a stalwart of Trump's plans to become tougher on "illegal aliens" and criminality. From the beginning of Trump's initial promise to build a wall in 2015, the slogan "build the wall" became a rallying cry for his supporters, one which seemed to encapsulate the xenophobic ideologies of a large portion of

Forward, January 20, 2017, https://forward.com/opinion/360713/how-trumps-inaugural-pastor-misread-the-bible/.

[30] Shawn Casselberry, "Bad Theology Builds Walls," shawncasselberry.com, January 11, 2018, https://www.shawncasselberry.com/single-post/2018/01/11/bad-theology-builds-walls.

[31] Mark D. Williamson, "Restoring the Walls: Reading Nehemiah in a Time of Tenuous Ecclesial Identity," *Word & World* 39, no. 2 (2019): 167.

[32] *Ibid.* 171-76.

[33] U.S. Congress. Subcommittee on National Security of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on National Security of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform*, 105th Congress, 1st session, 2017, 1-5.

the Republican Party [34]. As an answer to the changes made to the American immigration system in the 1960s, Trumpist anger towards the rapid change in demographics within the United States attempted to dismantle the immigration system, using the border wall as a "Trojan Horse" for policies that would seek to curtail both legal and illegal immigration [35]. Through the aid of the Evangelical vote in 2016, Donald Trump gained the victory, and his border wall gained Biblical precedence. It is important to note that for Evangelical voters of Trump, American values are in-line with conservative Christian values. These values make up what it means to be "American". It is essential to reconstruct American society to adhere to these traditional values [36]. Like so many issues within the "culture war" of the U.S., the issue of being pro- and anti-border wall became a wall of its own, dividing Americans into factions attempting to prove which belonged to the correct definition of what it meant be an "American".

As Yang states, the fight for "Americanness" has been waged since the Founding Fathers, and so the "culture war(s)" which surrounded the 2016 election were nothing new in essence [37]. Yet Trump especially encouraged a form of vitriol towards non-whites and non-Christians, symbolized by the border wall. To Yang, the border wall indicates a cultural wall built to divide the United States into two camps: essentialists and pluralists [38]. The in-group essentialists are an amalgamation of affluent and poor whites and social conservatives – mostly Evangelicals – who fight together as "defenders of American values and economic opportunities". The out-group pluralists are what pervert America. Thus, at a surface level, the wall presents those it wishes to keep out as enemies, and at a deeper level, exposes those within the wall's confines who are the enemies of those that built the wall. A wall, to Yang, is always more than a physical barrier; it serves to create a separation ideologically [39]; Jean-Pierre Ruiz notes a likewise situation, coincidentally, within Chapter 13 of the Book of Nehemiah, where the reading of the Torah makes a "wall of words" [40].

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[34] Ediberto Roman and Ernesto Sagas, 2020, 22.
[35] *Ibid.*, 23-4.
[36] See ``Une société – chrétienne – à reconstruire`` in André Gagné`s *Ces Évangéliques Derrière Trump*.
[37] Mimi Yang, "The Trump Wall: a Cultural Wall and a Cultural War," *Lateral* 6, no. 2 (2017).
[38] *Ibid.*, 3.
[39] *Ibid.*, 4.
[40] Jean-Pierre Ruiz, "`They Could Not Speak The Language of Judah`: Rereading Nehemiah 13 Between Brooklyn and Jerusalem," in *They Were All Together In*

The reading of the Torah creates a new ethical structure, fueled by OT scripture, to expel enemies of the community, and observing this section of the Nehemiah narrative echoes certain negative implications of Christian Zionist discourse. Once these walls are built, concepts must be set in place to determine who may stay within these walls [41]. Once it is deemed one hasn't followed the law, it becomes easier to exclude one from the community, as no physical force is necessary; one simply needs to be proven a failure of the wall's ideological standards – set in place by whoever takes the reigns, along any moral/lawful standard set by the leader(s) - to be expelled. Here lies the issue of the interfaith connection between Evangelicals and Jews. If the wall itself was a reflection of an ideological division happening within the country, then to have Christian Zionists, to a more considerable degree Christian Evangelicals, making the rules along with their values only lead to a greater subjugation of Jews in the mainstream. While the conservative American Jew may have voted for Trump due to his pro-Israel stance, it does not mean that America is any more open to "Jewishness". As Durbin notes, the enthusiasm behind Trump, and the increase in Christian Zionist discourse in mainstream conservative circles, also came with a rise in white nationalism and anti-Semitism[42]. Yet as long as anti-Semitism within conservative circles is tied directly to being anti-Israel, the rise of anti-Semitism within the U.S. can be brushed off by Trump and Christian Zionist spokespeople such as the CUFI.

2. Textual Analysis

2.1 On the Methodology

The following textual analysis presents two specific features of Jeffress' sermon. First, Jeffress encapsulates his American Nehemiad within a God macrostructure [43] which is utilized to highlight Trump's

One Place? Toward Minority Biblical Criticism, ed. Randall C. Bailey, Tat-siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 84.

[41] Ruiz notes the Torah is the final and most important ammunition Nehemiah has against his enemies. It is the absolute legal basis needed, the authoritative source, for his subsequent reforms.

[42] Sean Durbin, "From King Cyrus To Queen Esther: Christian Zionists' Discursive Construction of Donald Trump As God's Instrument," *Critical Research on Religion* 8, no. 2 (2020): 131.

[43] Macrostructures of Semantic Discourse are defined by Tuen van Djik as a ``theoretical reconstruction of intuitive notions such as topic or theme of a discourse. It explains what is most relevant, important, or prominent in the semantic information of the discourse as a whole``.

"chosen" nature and ends with the general population themselves becoming the true Nehemiah. This God macrostructure will be framed within the syntactic use of "God phrases" (phrases which include the word "God"), tracking syntactic changes in "God phrases", along with the networks of intertextuality constructed by Jeffress to support this macrostructure. Second, an analysis of Jeffress` American nehemiad's sub-themes will present the various ways the sermon frames in-groups and out-groups through rhetorical tools such as the use of overtly political/contemporary language and indetermination/differentiation, along with addressing issues in selectivity. This textual analysis aims to present the possible implications this sermon has on interfaith relations between American Evangelicals and Jews.

The following research draws heavily on Fairclough's concept of Textual Analysis and Hobb's conceptualization of manifest intertextuality (MI). As defined by Fairclough, textual analysis involves utilizing linguistic and intertextual analysis [44]. The linguistic analysis depends on tracking language systems in use. For example, in this research, the linguistic analysis falls mainly on the importance of syntax and semantics within Jeffress' sermon. The goal of the linguistic analysis is to identify linguistic specificities within a text, tracking how they are constructed and continually used, to identify how these linguistic tools are used discursively through intertextuality [45]. The intertextual analysis attempts to unlock the discursive goals of a text. It tracks how social and historical resources are used to form text and its possible interpretation. Within religious intertextual analysis, Hobbs identifies explicit intertextuality as MI [46]. Hobbs identifies four forms of manifest intertextuality: direct quotation, paraphrase, reference and parody [47]. Jeffress' use of Nehemiah within his sermon uses multiple

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For more see Tuen A. van Djik, "Global Coherence: Macrostructures," in *Handbook of Discourse Analysis Vol. 2: Dimensions of Discourse* (London: Academic Press, 1985), 115-17.

[44] Norman Fairclough, "Textual Analysis in Social Research," in *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (New York, NY: Longman Publishing, 1995), 188.

[45] *Ibid*., 189. As Fairclough states, ``The intertextual properties of a text are realized in its linguistic features.``

[46] Valerie Hobbs, "Investigating Religious Language: Metaphor and Intertextuality," in *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 98-9.

[47] For Hobbs, analyzing manifest intertextuality in a critical manner sheds light on the ways MI utilizes selectivity, role allocation, indetermination and differentiation and collectivisation and specification. *Selectivity* analyzes what is missing in a

examples of direct quotation and paraphrasing, with the constant metaphorical ties constructed between Trump and Nehemiah being a form of referential intertextuality in and of itself. By analyzing intertextuality in line with discourse, networks of intertextuality can be tracked throughout Jeffress' sermon to understand how these networks are used to bolster many different ideologies. The intertextual analysis of this research also draws on concepts of metaphor as presented by Hobbs and distinctions in social groups according to the ideological criticism of Tuen van Djik.

Hobbs states metaphor is a symbolic representation that extends our cognitive understanding [48]. It is also a rhetorical tool that marginalizes alternative meanings through the metaphor's not being said. Metaphor, in critical terms, utilizes a vehicle domain (that which is being used to represent) to alter our understanding of a target domain (that which is meant to be understood in a specific way by the use of metaphor). In Jeffress' sermon, the primary vehicle would be Nehemiah, and the target, at least at face value, would be Trump. To track religious metaphor, its deployment, and use, Hobbs suggests five steps, of which the most noteworthy for this paper is the separation of the main thematic group into sub-themes and the placing of line numbers at the beginning of each sentence to better track/discuss the text at hand [49]*. Within the main target/vehicle of Jeffress' Nehemian metaphor would be the themes of America as the new exilic Israel and critics as Sanballat and Tobiah.

The intertextual aspect of this textual analysis will use Hobbs' means of "religious metaphor identification" hand-in-hand with the Ideological Criticism of Tuen van Djik. Van Djik's Ideological Criticism uses two categories of social actors; in-groups and out-groups [50]. The in-groups either control the discourse, thus promoting an ideology through rhetorical means or those who are cast as the

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moment of MI and yet is crucial in the authoritative source. *Role allocation* presents the roles of social actors given in line with the MI presented. *Indetermination and differentiation* addresses where and possibly why social actors are specifically named or left unnamed in a case of MI. Finally, *Collectivisation* and specification address specific cases pf social actors being presented as a group or as individuals.

[48] *Ibid.*, 89.

[49] *Ibid.*, 95.

*** A version of the sermon with line numbers is provided at the end of this paper to give the reader reference material in this analysis.**

[50] Tuen van Djik, "Ideological Discourse Analysis," ed. Anna Solin and Eija Ventola, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Discourse Analysis* 4 (1995): 138-139.

ideologically superior group. Out-groups are presented negatively within a discourse, either in comparison to the in-group – an out-group does not always have to be directly named within a given discourse to be regarded as such – or through direct means of presentation. In the case of Jeffress' sermon, the in-groups can be defined as Trump's inner circle and the American people who both vote for Trump and adhere to Christian values. The out-group is the MSM and a general sense of evil that Jeffress attempts to depict as engulfing the United States.

2.2 Linguistic Analysis: Emphasizing the Syntactic Use of God and its Transformative Proprieties in Jeffress' American Nehemiad

To properly understand the use of Nehemiah in "When God Chooses a Leader", we must first look at how Jeffress depicts God throughout the sermon, thus creating a God macrostructure. Lines 1-6 introduce the central theme of Jeffress' sermon, and, therefore, the main theme of his Nehemiah metaphor, the active role of God within the *current* presidential cycle. Jeffress states that he was convinced that if Trump were to have one, it was because "God had placed you there" (5). The Biblical precedence for this is given through the intertextual paraphrasing of Daniel 2:21 in line 6, where God "removes" and "establishes" leaders. As Hobbs states, the act of paraphrasing blurs the line between the one quoting and the authoritative source being cited, allowing the one who quotes to re-write religious words to meet political means [51]. In this case, Jeffress strategically paraphrases "...disposes *kings* and sets up *kings*" (NOAB; emphasis added) to the more contemporary "*leaders*" [52]. It also uses the present tense to reiterate the continued presence of God in political matters syntactically. Then, Jeffress states that God "has raised" Trump and his team for an "eternal purpose" (7). God, according to Jeffress, was most definitely present in winning Trump the election. Jeffress wishes to demonstrate God has, and will always, chose leaders *when necessary*. Jeffress, a noted critic of Obama had once stated he believed the 44th president was "paving the way for the antichrist" [53], and now, according

[51] Valerie Hobbs, "Investigating Religious Language: Metaphor and Intertextuality," in *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 101-2.

[52] This falls in line with a frequent rhetorical tool of Jeffress, the selective manner in which contemporary political language is used in descriptions and will be elaborated on more in section 2.3.

[53] Eric Nicholson, "First Baptist's Robert Jeffress: Obama 'Paving the Way for the

to Jeffress, God has made a move in presenting a leader to the people with a mission directly handed down from the Lord and will effectively erase the misdeeds of the prior administration.

Through the evocation of God, Jeffress introduces the primary vehicle of his metaphor - Nehemiah. Lines 7-15 see Jeffress state "God chose" three times; first concerning a geographical marker, then twice in connection to traits which Jeffress implies apply to both Trump and Nehemiah. Additionally, some form of "build" is used seven times within this section, whose nominal form is attached directly to Nehemiah. Nehemiah is first presented as a great leader, yet Jeffress strips away his political and priestly ties to reveal Nehemiah as a layman, a builder chosen by God. The God phrases continue in the past tense – their primary mode of tense in the early portion of the sermon - as Jeffress states, "God instructed Nehemiah to build a wall", leading to a switch to the present tense; "God *is* not against building walls." This final present tense innovation acts as a defining climax to this section. As Knight states, this beginning section of the sermon serves to sacralize the "nationalistic stage" [54]. It directly ties Trump to the land as a leader who must protect it, as determined by God. It would seem the entirety of the Nehemiah metaphor's purpose is revealed within line 13, as much criticism towards the sermon would suggest. Yet as Hobbs clarifies, referential intertextuality is a form of rhetorical tool that allows the speaker the utmost authority in utilizing the reference to give power to them and the one being referenced [55]. Jeffress is baptizing Trump of his sins, as is evidenced in the following section where Jeffress takes to task the Mainstream Media and its criticisms of Trump. Trump is presented as the layman *du jour* chosen by God to be the *builder par excellence* of his day. In a modern sense, Trump is a blue-collar man tasked with an "eternal purpose". This directly ties Trump to the land, making him a sacralized nationalistic hero. The Nehemian metaphor will provoke the idea that Trump is cleared of all criticism past and present.

Antichrist,'" Dallas Observer, January 6, 2014, https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/first-baptists-robert-jeffress-obama-paving-the-way-for-the-antichrist-7110107.

[54] G. Brandon Knight, "Evangelicalism and the Refugee: World Making and the Hermeneutical Rhetorics of a Religious Public and Counterpublic," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 44, no. 1 (2021): 114.

[55] Valerie Hobbs, "Investigating Religious Language: Metaphor and Intertextuality," in *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 102.

Lines 41-56 provide two key syntactic uses of "God" within this sermon: the "Godly Adjective" formula. These supply what van Djik calls a rhetorical "resource description" [56]. This rhetorical tool emphasizes a resource that an in-group requires to exist. The first use within 41 states that Nehemiah recognized the need for "God's divine help", with a call to God through prayer being given Biblical precedence through direct quotation intertextuality. The use of direct quotation is quite deliberate in Jeffress' sermon, which plays with many different forms of intertextuality. Direct quotation makes a clear distinction between the one quoting and the authoritative text [57]. Jeffress, through this intertextual act emphasizes the necessity to follow Nehemiah 1:11. The second use of this formula is presented in line 48 where Jeffress states, "we need God's supernatural power". Jeffress effectively uses God to lead out of the Nehemiah metaphor. In the beginning of the sermon, God served as the main theme, allowing Trump similar statues to Nehemiah, now Jeffress is making a point that leadership and leaders are not enough. In line 48, the people are now the subject of the phrase; they are the ones who need God's help like Nehemiah once needed. The people are being called on to act as "Nehemiahs" because strong leadership is not enough, even if God chooses leaders, establishes them, Jeffress states this is useless unless God's people use their power to support the candidates selected by God, and thus support God actively through prayer.

G. Brandon Knight writes that Jeffress's sermon's main warning is towards Trump, equating Jeffress' mentioning of God's supernatural power with a call for Trump to recognize God [58]. Yet this research suggests Trump, once the target domain of the Nehemiah vehicle, escapes Nehemiah's necessary action to complete his mission of restoring the nation. Psalm 50:15 is given as Biblical precedence of how to ask for God's help, and this is directed as a necessary action of the entire God-fearing community. Jeffress quotes Ronald Reagan, giving political precedence to the people requiring God's help, evoking the politically embedded metaphor of "one nation under God" (52). If the

[56] Tuen van Djik, "Ideological Discourse Analysis," ed. Anna Solin and Eija Ventola, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Discourse Analysis* 4 (1995): 149.

[57] Valerie Hobbs, "Investigating Religious Language: Metaphor and Intertextuality," in *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 101.

[58] G. Brandon Knight, "Evangelicalism and the Refugee: World Making and the Hermeneutical Rhetorics of a Religious Public and Counterpublic," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 44, no. 1 (2021): 115.

nation falters in its honor of God, the nation will be left behind, much like Jerusalem was once left behind in the exile. This network of intertextuality not only re-appropriates Israel's exilic status but also looks to re-write the ending. Now, with the quotation of Psalm 33:12, Jeffress echoes the sentiments of Reagan and demonstrates how to survive this American post-exilic state; by honoring the Lord as a nation. Then a last direct quotation is used to give credence to this notion; Psalm 33:12. Jeffress makes it clear it is the nation's responsibility to ask for God's help. Much like Nehemiah, Trump can only build and hope the nation follows. Here, Jeffress provides the Biblical tools to how a nation becomes blessed. The fact that all these quotations are direct quotations adds a weight of scripture and political precedence, emphasizing the climax of his sermon as a guide towards salvation. Jeffress provides a warning of the dire consequences, i.e damnation, and Jeffress makes it easy for the listener/reader to find salvation. The verses are explicitly given, and Jeffress blatantly states their use. Within lines 51 and 52 we see the final and most telling sign Jeffress views the salvation of America as a burden of the American people.

The final lines of Jeffress' sermon find the reverend relying on a final innovation in the syntactic use of God. The God+Verb formula utilizes the future tense, asking first for God to bless Trump and his team, then to bless the American people. Yet Jeffress adds the adverb "truly" with the United States (56). Capitalizing on a traditional ending of American political speeches [59], Trump becomes an afterthought in the closing moments of the sermon. Trump, as a tool, helps the Christian nation recognize itself. To be "truly blessed", in the address, means to answer Reagan's call, to use the Biblical precedence provided, and to "kneel" to God (42). Jeffress' sermon ends with a call to piety and gives this piety a nationalistic sense. As a hermeneutical key to the sermon, one must re-read the sermon through the concept of the nation and avoid the temptation to read a pro-Trump throughout the entirety of the sermon, especially within the final section. Jeffress` ending line is also

[59] Trump was, ironically, the first president in recent history to not end his inaugural victory speech with ``God bless America``.
see Marta Cooper, "Donald Trump Is The First President-Elect In Three Decades To Not End His Victory Speech Blessing The USA," Quartz, November 9, 2016, https://qz.com/832636/election-2016-donald-trump-is-the-first-president-elect-in-three-decades-to-not-end-his-victory-speech-blessing-the-country/.
For more on the history of ``God bless America``, see Kevin Coe and David Domke , "Happy 35th, 'God Bless America'," Time (Time Inc., April 29, 2008), http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1735972,00.html.

its ultimate goal; it wishes to provide a road to blessing America. For America to be "truly blessed" it must recognize itself as a Christian nation and support the leaders whom reverends such as Jeffress have stated are "chosen".

2.3 Modern Exile and Biblical Enemies: Tracking Differences in Language Used To Define the Nation and its Enemies

While Jeffress presents the main vehicle of the Nehemiah metaphor in line 8, it also serves to introduce the first sub-theme Jeffress' American Nehemiad; post-exilic Israel, as an allusion to America. Lines 7-15 define the *nation as exilic* and establishing *enemies of state* through political buzzwords and politically technical language [60]. When speaking of the nation, Jeffress uses a mix of negative lexical words such as "bondage" and "shambles" and political jargon such as "infrastructure" to create a connection between the post-exilic Israel and current issues within American politics. As previously stated, Durbin notes a significant implication of Christian Zionism is to read modern civil happenings (pertaining mainly to the U.S.) into the Bible. Jeffress makes it clear that the leader chosen to lead Israel out of these political matters was not a politician [61], making direct ties that Trump has been chosen to lead America out of its exilic state. Yet, Jeffress remains selective in the information shared. He makes no mention of why Israel is in such a sorry state. The perpetrators of "exilicness" are indetermined, with only vague references of "enemy attacks" being provided to give credence to the establishment of the wall. Jeffress turns blind to the fact that exile is understood mainly as being caused by the people's lack of faith - yet lack of faith, or instead rediscovering faith, is a central theme of "When God Chooses a Leader" [62].

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[60] Hobbs defines technical language as “words and phrases that have specialized and restricted meaning in certain contexts and so tend to be unrecognizable to (and are rarely used by) people outside of a particular community or discipline. Some refer to this type of vocabulary as jargon”.
see Valerie Hobbs, “Vocabulary, Archaism and Parallelism,” in *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 72.

[61] Jeffress states that Trump, like Nehemiah, is not a priest, yet Jeffress emphasizes Nehemiah’s capacity to pray and recognize the necessity of God in order to establish a great nation. Interestingly, it is at this moment in lines 42 to 50 where the American nehemiad is shifted.

[62] In lines 42-57, Jeffress calls on the nation to become a collective Nehemiah by “calling on God” and by supporting the “Godly” candidate, and utilizes Reagan’s quotation to issue a warning for what may happen if Jeffress’ proposed methods

Line 31 equally utilizes a mixture of negative lexical and politically technical words to construct a modern state of *exilicness* within the U.S. The obstacles which face Nehemiah are likewise presented in current terms ("economic recession" and "terrorists"), and now place the dangerous out-groups as being present both beyond and within geographical borders in their form of "discouragement" from the population. The out-groups created by the sub-theme has placed the nation in bondages and include both temporally inner and outer contributors. The presentation of indetermined out-groups in lines 7-12 finds Jeffress playing with the superficial political motives of the wall. It keeps foreigners out and protects the citizens within. Yet more so, it creates walls of ideology. With this "mental wall" in place, it is easier to point to those citizens who are the nation's inner enemies, those that discourage the leader from completing the mission at hand. Interestingly, Jeffress completely melds the notion of wall building and rebuilding the nation. The wall ties Nehemiah and Trump together at the surface level; what it truly demonstrates are the intentions of the two to restore their respective nations to what they once were.

In lines 16-30, Jeffress finally establishes a more differentiated enemy through a process of taking an indetermined out-group ("critics") and utilizing this group to pinpoint a differentiated enemy in the MSM through their embodiment in Sanballat and Tobiah. More specifically, lines 16-22 normalize Trump's criticism and parody it before returning to the Nehemian metaphor. Jeffress first paraphrases a quote from an indetermined speaker, which alludes to the fact that any great leader will face criticism (line 16). Jeffress' goal in this section is to state criticism is natural (line 17), yet it must not be listened to because it is against God's plan. Jeffress essentially parodies talking points from the MSM, emphasizing that they are not only capable of being proven wrong, but they have also been proven wrong. They will continue in this matter as long as they criticize Trump. Within lines 19 through 22, criticism comes from a faceless multitude filled with presuppositions. They are proven wrong by Trump and invariably by God at every turn because Trump is God's instrument. As Knight points out, Jeffress' rhetoric effectively "purifies" Trump from all criticism, no matter how much it may reflect on the less than "Christian" nature of his character [63].

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are ignored

[63] G. Brandon Knight, "Evangelicalism and the Refugee: World Making and the Hermeneutical Rhetorics of a Religious Public and Counterpublic," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 44, no. 1 (2021): 114-115.

Lines 23-30 utilize Nehemiah to give Biblical precedence to avoiding criticism, metaphorically differentiating the primary enemies of the state as the MSM. After re-introducing the Nehemiad, Jeffress generalizes the whole of the MSM as the enemies of Trump. They are the modern Sanaballat and Tobiah the "chief antagonists" who "hound", "heckle" and "spread false rumors " *. Jeffress direct quotes the OT, framing it as a "classic" response, giving precedence to avoiding criticism. Avoiding criticism is set up as part of the norms and values for a leader such as Trump, as he has been "called by God and elected by the people". Simultaneously, Jeffress is making it known that the people of America have a literal impact on the goal of God and restoring the nation from its "post-exilic" bondage. Again, the selectivity of Jeffress' American Nehemiad provides a possible insight into the true motives of this section. Within the Book of Nehemiah, Sanballat and Tobiah are the main enemies of Nehemiah who attempt to thwart him from building the wall. They are also key parts of Nehemiah's subsequent reforms in Chapter 13 where Tobiah is expelled from the Temple where he appeared to live, and a daughter of Sanballat is forced to divorce the son of a High Priest. Without saying it, Jeffress is calling for casting out of the MSM from the minds of Trump voters, for the MSM symbolizes an impurity in line with Nehemiah's enemies. The form of reform Jeffress alludes to is not to be put in place by Trump, but by the American people through whom they chose to elect. It is the community who defines the leader, not the leader who defines the community.

2.4 Concluding Thoughts of Analysis

The implications of Jeffress` God macrostructure on interfaith relations between Evangelicals and Jews can be split into two categories: the superficial and deep. At a superficial level, Jeffress seems to be calling on the same Biblical figures as Judaism to give precedence, thus reason, to domestic policy. As evidenced by certain Jewish publications, this was met with agreement. Trump, as a man “of the people” recognized – or was divinely placed to change, rather – a

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NOTE: As part of this divine plan being put in place, Jeffress purifies himself from criticism. The nature of Jeffress’ time with Trump had proven to be controversial, for among many things, for claiming other religions – such as Judaism – would “lead people to an eternity of separation from God in hell”.

* A clear allusion to “fake news”.

* In this sense, calling Nehemiah a ``success`` would not say he succeeded in reforming the community, but rather succeeded in remaining pious in the face of a community unwilling to change.

domestic issue that reflected a larger common enemy in Islamic terrorism. At the "deeper" level within this God macrostructure, appearing to call on a Judeo-Christian God demonstrates how Jeffress' American nehemiad specifically sees America as the exilic land and the God-fearing American nation as the faithful Nehemiah. Jeffress calls on the country to pray and be *truly* blessed. Trump is shown to be the instrument of God, he is the builder, but he is not the pious one whom the American nehemiad seeks to idealize. Piousness becomes a necessity of the entire nation. The community may have failed in the Nehemiah narrative, but if the contemporary society of exiles follows the "successful" ` Nehemiah's example*, they will become great again. But this re-appropriation does not automatically entail negative implications for interfaith relations until a closer look is taken at the sub-themes of the American nehemiad presented by Jeffress *.

The two sub-themes paint an interesting picture. The current situation is grave but also familiar, especially to Jews. Scripture has shown the way out, and Jeffress reminds us of what it takes to make it out of exile. It takes more than a leader; it takes a nation willing to call on God. As for the enemies who attempt to stop this path towards salvation? They are not only to be expected but welcomed in a sense. They provide the necessary tools to prove a form of American exceptionalism [64] rooted in Judeo-Christian values. While most remain faceless, one, in particular, should be ignored at all costs, that being the MSM – the purveyors of falsehoods. The fact that Trump, his team, and his followers were, and are at this time still, untouchable in terms of scrutiny from the MSM and any who echo their sentiments is dangerous for not just the American Jewish community, but all religious minorities within the United States [65]. While at a surface level this sermon can be interpreted as pro "hard on immigration", the deeper connotations have scarier implications for any religious minority groups who are not willing to simply relegate themselves to being pariahs in the Christian nation right-wing Evangelicals such as Jeffress aspire to turn America

* While the general act of appropriation may be deemed inappropriate by some, it does not become dangerous – whether in the long or short term – until the impact of such appropriation can be understood on those whose culture has been appropriated in some capacity.

[64] As Knight states, "this address reveals the vision of the legitimated public and an example of their hermeneutical rhetoric, which blurs the orthodox tradition through American exceptionalism" (114).

[65] Sean Durbin, "From King Cyrus To Queen Esther: Christian Zionists' Discursive Construction of Donald Trump As God's Instrument," *Critical Research on Religion* 8, no. 2 (2020): 131-32.

into.

3. Conclusion

To summarize with both the socio-historical context and textual analysis in mind, firstly, Nehemiah is a rhetorical tool used by Jeffress in the form of referential intertextuality doubling as a metaphor. Furthermore, this rhetorical tool is used in line with three different standards: Christian Zionism, the American nehemiad and "wall" ideology. The importance of this is that each standard gives Jeffress' Nehemian metaphor a unique implication.

The discussion on Christian Zionism demonstrated how Christian Zionists utilize Old Testament figures to depict Trump as an instrument of God, which subsequently gave Jeffress' sermon - and Christian Zionism as a whole - positive standing within certain Israeli publications. Patterson's conceptualization of the American nehemiad demonstrated Nehemiah's use in public discourse to emphasize "American" values, most important to Jeffress' sermon being those of piety and perseverance in the face of scrutiny.

This brought about insight from Biblical scholars' assessment of the Nehemiah narrative's emphasis on "failure". While Evangelical understandings of Nehemiah, evidenced well through the American nehemiad itself, idealize Nehemiah, Jeffress' nehemiad echoes certain aspects of failure within his sermon. It states what needs to be done to access God's "supernatural" power, offers a warning of what happens without it, in the hopes of avoiding failure, which is a responsibility to be shared by the collective, not solely by the collective's leader.

The textual analysis detailed this transformation of responsibility in two definitive ways. First, Jeffress' Godly macrostructure utilized several "God phrases" which shifted throughout the sermon in calculated ways. In a most general sense, these "God phrases" were initially used to depict Trump as the chosen leader, and by sermon's end were used to state to the community the necessity of calling God's resources to "truly bless" the nation. Secondly, various peculiarities in the language used by Jeffress painted the U.S as exilic to justify the concept of wall building. With the negative image of the state as exiled created, a separation between external and internal enemies comes for where the internal enemies are emphasized through the differentiation and the referential/metaphorical association with Nehemiah's Biblical enemies. Thus, the responsibility of the nation "under God" became to ignore those internal critics, which this paper suggested had negative interfaith implications for American Jews – and which can be extended to all religious minorities in the United States.

When God chooses a leader: **Nehemiah 1:11 – The Rev. Robert Jeffress Sermon**

1) President-elect and Mrs. Trump, Vice-President-elect and Mrs. Pence, families and friends, it's an honor to be with you on this historic day. 2) President-elect Trump, I remember that it was exactly one year ago this weekend that I was with you on your Citation jet flying around Iowa before the first caucus or primary vote was cast. 3) After our Wendy's cheeseburgers, I said that I believed that you would be the next President of the United States. 4) And if that happened, it would be because God had placed you there. 5) As the prophet Daniel said, it is God who removes and establishes leaders. 6) Today ─ one year later ─ God has raised you and Vice-President-elect Pence up for a great, eternal purpose. 7) When I think of you, President-elect Trump, I am reminded of another great leader God chose thousands of years ago in Israel. 8) The nation had been in bondage for decades, the infrastructure of the country was in shambles, and God raised up a powerful leader to restore the nation. 9) And the man God chose was neither a politician nor a priest. 10) Instead, God chose a builder whose name was Nehemiah.11) And the first step of rebuilding the nation was the building of a great wall. 12) God instructed Nehemiah to build a wall around Jerusalem to protect its citizens from enemy attack. 13) You see, God is NOT against building walls! 14) And the Old Testament book of Nehemiah records how Nehemiah completed that massive project in record time — just 52 days.15) Why was Nehemiah so successful in building the wall and rebuilding the nation?

I. Nehemiah Refused to Allow His Critics To Distract Him

16) Someone has said there are three guaranteed ways to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing. 17) Any true leader is going to face criticism. 18) President-elect Trump, you have had your share of critics from the day you announced you were running for President, but you've confounded them at every turn. 19) First, they said you couldn't win the nomination, but you ended up garnering the most votes of any Republican in history. 20) Then they said that was a fluke, but you couldn't win the election. 21) And you handily defeated your opponent. 22) And now your critics say you can't possibly succeed in your agenda . 23) Nehemiah had his own share of critics. 24) Two of his chief antagonists were named Sanballat and Tobiah . 25) They were the mainstream media of their day .26) They continued to hound and heckle Nehemiah and spread false rumors while he and the

Israelites were building the wall. 27) At one point, they said, "Nehemiah, you need to stop the project and come down from the wall and have a meeting with us." 28) Nehemiah's response was classic: "I'm doing a great work . . . why should I stop the work and come down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3) 29) President-elect Trump, you, Vice President-elect Pence, and your team have been called by God and elected by the people to do a great work. 30) It is a work far too important to stop and answer your critics.

II. Nehemiah Refused to Allow Setbacks To Stop Him

31) As you read through Nehemiah's journal, you'll find that he faced tremendous obstacles as he attempted to rebuild the nation: an economic recession, terrorist attacks from enemies, and discouragement among the citizens. 32) But none of those setbacks was enough to stop Nehemiah. 33) Some years ago, two sports commentators on television were discussing the late Hall of Famer Walter Peyton, the running back for the Chicago Bears. 34) One commentator said, "Can you believe that during his career Peyton has run more than nine miles with a football?" 35) The other commentator replied, "What's even more amazing is that every 3.8 yards of those nine miles Peyton got knocked down by a guy twice his size! 36) But he got back up every time and kept moving forward despite those bruising hits and hard knocks." 37) President Trump, you, your team and your families are going to face some bruising setbacks. 38) But remember. .39) The true measure of a leader is what it takes to stop him. 40) And knowing you, I believe it's going to take a lot to stop you.

III. Nehemiah Sought God's Help to Empower Him

41) Nehemiah was a gifted leader, but he knew he could not succeed without God's divine help. 42) And that is why as he began the great work, Nehemiah knelt before God and prayed: "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant who delights in revering your name. 43). Give your servant success today . . ." (Nehemiah 1:11). 44) Mr. President-elect, I don't believe we have ever had a president with as many natural gifts as you. 45) As you know, the reason I endorsed you within weeks of your announcement that you were running was because I believed that you were the only candidate who possessed the leadership skills necessary to reverse the downward trajectory of our nation. 46) And beginning with Vice President-elect Pence ─ a great and godly man ─ you've assembled an unbelievably talented group of advisers around you. 47) But the challenges facing our nation are so great that it will take more than natural ability to meet

them. 48) We need God's supernatural power. 49) The good news is that the same God who empowered Nehemiah nearly 2500 years ago is available to every one of us today who is willing to humble himself and ask for His help .50) God says in Psalm 50:15 "Call upon Me in the day of trouble I shall rescue you and you will honor Me." 51) When President Ronald Reagan addressed the Republican National Convention in my city of Dallas in 1984 he said , "America needs God more than God needs America. 52) If we ever forget that we are "one nation under God," then we will be a nation gone under." 53) President-elect Trump, you had a campaign slogan that resonated with tens of millions of Americans because it spoke to their heartfelt desire: "Make America Great Again." 54) Psalm 33:12 gives us the starting point for making that happen: "Blessed — great — is the nation whose God is the Lord." 55) May God bless President-elect Trump, Vice-President-elect Pence, their families and advisers. 56) And may God truly bless the United States of America.

Discerning the Truth: Greek and Biblical Roots in Origen's Principle of Discernment

Ridge Shukrun

Introduction

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA, a prolific exegete and theologian, was the first to explicitly appropriate the principle of discernment. In the third book of *De Principiis*, Origen details this principle as it relates to scriptural exegesis. However, the emphasis on being able to judge correctly what is true and good can be observed in Christian writing as early as the letters of the Apostle Paul; it has also been interpreted in many ways depending on the context of its application. In addition to Scripture, Origen was also profoundly influenced by Greek philosophy, particularly the works of Plato and the Stoics. This paper will attempt to identify these influences on Origen's principle of discernment, as well as how it relates to the task of scriptural exegesis.

The first section of this paper will explore discernment in the writings of the apostle Paul. In particular, I will show how for Paul, discernment is often used in the context of "testing," that it requires a transformation through purification and "renewal" of the mind and that it is linked to the aspects of choice, reflection, and one's relationship to God.

In the second section of this paper, I will explore Plato Stoicism to determine several more potential influences on Origen's principle of discernment. I will begin by looking at Plato's anthropology and his theory of Forms. I will then show how discernment in Plato and the Stoics is linked to self-knowledge and transformation. Finally, I will look at allegorical interpretation and the status of myths in both Plato

and the Stoics.

In the final section of this paper, I will synthesize my findings with Origen's principle of discernment found in *De Principiis*. I will also look at some of his other works through secondary sources.

Methodology

My methodology in this paper will be a comparative one. In the first section, will look at Paul's works through primary and secondary sources; in the second section, I will look at Plato through primary and secondary sources, and Stoicism through secondary sources. Finally, I will look at *De Principiis* and secondary sources on Origen and compare his principle of discernment—in particular as it relates to Scripture—with my findings in the previous sections.

Discernment in Paul

As an expert exegete who believed in the unified nature of scripture, Origen was well-versed in the Bible and took much inspiration from it. Seeing as there are no texts in the New Testament which more outwardly expresses the concept of discernment than those written by Paul, I will proceed by exploring his letters to determine their significance in this regard. I will begin with an article by Paul Sciberras which presents certain key uses of discernment in Paul through the act of "testing." I will then look at Galatians more closely through the work of D. Francois Tolmie; in his article, the author establishes three main aspects of discernment in the letter. I will conclude the section by exploring André Munziger's view on discernment in Paul as fundamentally linked to the transformation of the mind.

In his article *Discernment in 1 Thessalonians*, Paul Sciberras outlines several key instances in which Paul uses the verb δοκιμάζειν and its context in each case. Paul warns us to examine and test both ourselves and our work (1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4) and not to eat and drink without discerning the body (1 Cor 11:29); he says test others (everything) and hold fast to what is good (1 Thess 5:20–21; 1 Tim 3:10); we will also be tested with temptation (1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 3:5) and must reject this evil; finally, we are to discover "the things that are important or pleasing to God" (Rom 2:18; 12:2; Phil 1:10). [1] Although the authorship is in doubt, Hebrews 5:14 is also in line with this understanding: "solid food is for the mature, for those whose

[1] Paul Sciberras, "Discernment in 1 Thessalonians," *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 17 (2013): 173–74.

faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." According to Sciberras, the importance in this kind of testing for Paul is the ability to separate what is true from what is false and to make sure that what is discerned is used correctly.[2] Sciberras notes that discernment has both a concrete, present dimension and a future dimension: "discernment enables the human heart to realize its full potential by purifying it from all obstacles" while keeping in mind that the ultimate reason for doing so is the eschatological judgement.[3] This process of purification is the ongoing identification with the will of God as expressed in the Law.[4]

In D. Francois Tolmie's article *Discernment in the Letter to the Galatians*, we can find an in-depth look at Paul's use of discernment in this particular letter. Tolmie extracts three main aspects of discernment from a comparison he makes of various definitions,[5] then analyzes the letter to the Galatians through this lens and shows where and how they are evident in Paul's writing. These aspects are: (1) reflection, (2) choice and (3) one's relationship to God.[6] There are several excerpts explored in the article, but for the sake of brevity I will use Galatians 3:1–5 as an example due to its portrayal of all three aspects. Discernment in this section of the letter appears through the use of term ἀνόητος, which in this context is explained as: "… pertaining to unwillingness to use one's mental faculties in order to understand … the meaning of ἀνόητος is that people presumably would not use their capacity to understand and as a result, thought and behaved foolishly."[7] According to Tolmie, this failure to understand refers to a "lack of (theological) insight;"[8] Paul chastised the Galatians for not using their capacities to reflect upon their experience of the Spirit in order to discern the truth or falsity of the gospel.[9] This section reflects the aspect

[2] *Ibid.*, 172.
[3] *Ibid.*, 172;182–84.
[4] *Ibid.*, 181.
[5] D. Francois Tolmie, "Discernment in the Letter to the Galatians," *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 17 (2013): 156–57. Tolmie brings together definitions by Kees Waaijman (2002), Elizabeth Liebert (2008), David Lonsdale (2005) and André Munziger (2007).
[6] *Ibid.*, 158. Choice and relationship to God in relation to discernment is demonstrated Gal 2:1–21; Gal 3:1–5; Gal 5:13–6:10. Reflection is demonstrated in Gal 3:1–5.
[7] E.A. Nida and J.P. Louw, *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament based on semantic domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 386.
[8] Tolmie, *op. cit.*, 163.
[9] *Ibid.*

of *choice* of discernment because in it the Galatians are lectured for having made the wrong choice between faith and works; it reflects the aspect of *relationship to God* because the wrong choice is in direct conflict with God's truth; it reflects the aspect of *reflection* because Paul urges the Galatians to reflect on their past experiences.[10] All of these are intrinsically linked to Paul's key theological ideas.[11] Tolmie's view is also similar to Sciberras in that he acknowledges both a present and future eschatological dimension to discernment in Paul.[12]

So far, I have shown some of the contexts in which Paul sees us using discernment as well as some key aspects related to its meaning. Discernment is often exercised when we are either testing or being tested; it involves reflection and choice (potentially between good and evil) and is linked to our relationship with God. In light of this last point, it is important to remember that to Paul, discernment is also a gift which we receive from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:10). This relates to Paul's epistemological views: it is only with the help of the Spirit that we are able to discern what is good, true and pleasing to God. However, if cognitive reflection and choice are important aspects of discernment, is reason enough or does true knowledge come from the Spirit? Is it simply the gift of being able to *discern* true knowledge that comes from the Spirit? In *Discerning the Spirits: Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul*, André Munziger approaches this issue at length by investigating epistemology in the Jewish Hellenistic (including apocalyptic theology and Philo of Alexandria) and Stoic traditions (which I look more closely at in the next section) as well as studying both the words and concepts in Paul which refer to discernment.[13] Munziger comes to the conclusion that discernment plays both an *interpretative* and a *corrective* role in Paul's epistemology.[14]

Discernment is corrective in its capacity to "evaluate experiences

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[10] *Ibid.*, 163–64.

[11]Tolmie, *op. cit.*, 158 : "[…] what is said with regard to discernment in the letter, is tied up with fundamental theological convictions that Paul holds, pertaining to matter such as the truth of the gospel, spiritual liberty, God's justification of humankind through faith, the bending of one's will to that of the Spirit, one's relationship with the rest of the Christian community, and, finally, the eschatological reality of God's judgement as the final arbiter of one's self-discernment."

[12] *Ibid.*, 168.

[13] André Munziger, *Discerning the Spirits: Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15;17.

[14] *Ibid.*, 17.

and claims to inspiration in the Pauline churches;[15] It is interpretative in that it both develops through *and* is crucial to the ongoing transformation of the believer, or "renewal of the mind" (Rom 12:2) so that they can accurately interpret the Christ-event[16] and appropriate "formerly hidden knowledge."[17] Munziger here makes the critical point that for Paul, it is *in this transformation* that true knowledge is understood;[18] it is intrinsically linked with the experience of being.[19] The Spirit and reason in the human mind are not absolute opposites; instead, "the Spirit can enhance reason and enable it to attain its full potential of discernment."[20] It is clear that discernment is central to Paul, but it is also central in Hellenistic epistemology. To determine its roots, particularly as they relate to Origen's thought, we should now look to Plato and the Stoics.

Discernment in Plato and Stoicism

This section will primarily focus on Plato, but I have included the Stoics in reference to two main topics: transformation and allegorical interpretation. Discernment was clearly important in the thought of Plato and the Stoics. To demonstrate this, I will present an overview of some of Plato's theories as they relate to discernment. This is, of course, not an exhaustive portrayal of Platonic or Stoic thought, but merely a synthesis of several topics which are related to discernment. This analysis will mostly be done through secondary sources such as the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy and other authors. First, I will begin with Plato's theory of Forms, the fallen state of humanity and the contemplation of the Form of Good as the highest endeavour of the human soul. I will then demonstrate how Plato believed one could achieve this goal; namely, through purification, training, and intense inquiry, which leads to a transformation and development of virtue.

Next, I will introduce the notion of transformation in Stoicism and link these to discernment. Finally, I will talk about allegorical interpretation and the place of myths in Stoic and Platonic thought. It is necessary to begin with Plato's understanding of the nature of the

[15] *Ibid*.
[16] *Ibid.*, 16. Munziger defines 'Christ-event' as "a broad understanding of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus."
[17] *Ibid.*, 17; Tolmie, *op. cit.*, 165. Tolmie echoes the importance of transformation in relation to discernment, stating that it requires "those who have been liberated by (and in) Christ" to bend their will to that of the Spirit.
[18] Munziger, *op. cit.*, 82.
[19] *Ibid.*, 86.
[20] *Ibid.*, 120.

universe and subsequently, the human soul. In *The Republic*, Plato has Socrates explain the nature of the universe as divisible into two realms: the visible realm and the intelligible realm. On the continuum between these realms, Socrates places in ascending order of clarity (1) images/shadows, (2) visible objects, (3) truths arrived at via hypotheses and (4) the Forms.[21] The Forms are the essence of things in their unchanging perfection, the greatest of which is the Good. The Form of the Good "provides the objects of knowledge with their being" and is what allows the human soul (*nous,* intellect) to gain knowledge by shedding light on the objects of knowledge as the sun sheds light on the things of the world.[22] Contemplation of the Forms is the highest pursuit of a soul; the reason for the embodied soul's great difficulty to do so (or in some cases, even perceive them) is its fallen state due to the loss of its wings which caused it to fall to earth.[23] Because the soul was able to contemplate the Forms before the fall, gaining knowledge of them is a process of "recollection" and re-conforming to the soul's original state.[24]

This capacity of the human soul is reattained through a process of purification, training and intense inquiry.[25] Plato at length distinguishes between the soul, which bears a likeness to the reality of the Forms in its invisibility, immortality and unchangeability, and the body, which is like the visible world: mortal, and always changing.[26] The process of the purification of the soul entails a freeing of the soul from bodily influence; its poisonous effect "fills us with wants, desires, fears, all sorts of illusions and much nonsense" (Phaedo 66c). Since the body is a means of distraction and deception, one who truly loves knowledge—the true philosopher— "despises bodily pleasures such as food, drink, and sex, so he more than anyone else wants to free himself from his body" (64d–65a).[27] According to Manuel C. Ortiz de

[21] "Republic," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed April 15, 2021, https://iep.utm.edu/republic/#SH5e. These sections are related to the corresponding capacities of the human soul: imagination, belief, thought and understanding, respectively.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] McGibbon, "The Fall of the Soul in Plato's Phaedrus," *The Classical Quarterly* 14, No. 1 (1964): 56.
[24] "Phaedo," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed April 15, 2021, https://iep.utm.edu/phaedo/.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*

Landazuri, the process of purifying oneself also leads to self-knowledge [28], which begins with the "recognition of our human condition." [29]

The true philosopher must also undergo intellectual training and intense inquiry to achieve contemplation of the Form of the Good according to Plato. In *Phaedo*, Socrates is critical of his interlocutor, Meno, for being intellectually lazy (86b). Although humans are innately capable of virtue and wisdom, these capacities must be developed [30]. Furthermore, it is not enough to receive verbal teachings regarding these; one must seek a master of virtue (95d ff) to guide one's own active inquiry. Socrates uses the example of a geometry lesson to teach Meno that working through problems "many times in many ways" (85c) and "successful persistent inquiry in the face of previous failures" is necessary [31].

In *The Republic*, Plato's description of the necessary education for a true philosopher is given a political context; he explains that it is the thoroughly educated who should rule the society— what he called the "philosopher king (473c-d)." [32] this education is a rigorous training in poetry, music, physical education (521d-e), mathematics, arithmetic, numbers (522c), plane geometry (526c), solid geometry (528b), astronomy (528e), harmonics (530d) and dialectic (532a) [33]. Due to the corrupting nature of the political regime, philosophers should pursue this education in solitude (496c-d) [34]. The extreme difficulty and heavy education throughout their lives, especially when they are older (498a-c), necessitates a desire to consistently pursue knowledge.

The individual who perseveres may attain knowledge of the Forms and the Form of the Good; having attained some knowledge of the Good, the philosopher is more and more motivated to exhibit just behavior [35]. This virtuous disposition which one slowly and laboriously conforms to is central to Plato's main endeavour: theability to distinguish between a "false phantom" and truth [36]; In other words, to

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[28] Manuel C. Ortiz Landazuri, "The Development of Self-Knowledge in Plato's Philosophy," *Logos* 48 (2015): 131.
[29] *Ibid.*, 132.
[30] Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Phaedo."
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "The Republic."
[33] *Ibid.* Dialectic training in particular was necessary for understanding the Forms and the Form of the Good.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Munziger, *op. cit.*, 121.

discern between the illusory world and the world of Forms. Munziger even notes how for Plato, *both* "rational and divine forms of guidance aid the process of discernment," themselves in need of "interpretative evaluation" due to ambiguity [37]. Additionally, we again see the necessity of some kind of transformation, like in Paul, to develop discernment.

According to Munziger, we see a similar need for transformation in Stoicism. In striving for eudaimonia—the main goal of Stoic thought [38]— one undergoes a "conversion" when one is "struck" by some external force [39]. To the extent that the individual identifies with and feels a sense of belonging towards what they have experienced, this change carries them from the "I-level," at which they are concerned only with personal desires, to the "S-level" at which they are concerned with the group desires and truth [40]. Munziger's description of this transformation is well-articulated:

The individual 'grows up' and learns that it is not a particular object through which one can obtain happiness, but only by '*using one's reason* for the purpose for which it is designed, that is, for reaching *truth about* the world.' […] It is a view 'from above', a view which will allow him/her to assess and understand the world correctly [41].

This transformation is an achieving of self-knowledge; it is the result of a a completely new mindset which sees oneself as a "part of the whole." [42] Landazuri echoes this idea in Plato by noting that adopting a virtuous disposition towards the Good is another step towards self-knowledge "as an indirect awareness of our own position towards what is most real: Good, Beauty, and Truth." [43] This transformation is related to discernment because its result is the development of a "critical faculty which can scrutinize everything else […]; a comprehensive knowledge of good and bad […]." [44] As a final note on this transformation in Stoicism, Munziger fleshes out

[37] *Ibid.*, 122.
[38] *Ibid.*, 126.
[39] *Ibid*, 124. For Paul, this exterior force is God. For the Stoics, it is reason.
[40] *Ibid*. Munziger is expressing a model put forth by Troels Engberg-Pedersen in his work *Paul and the Stoics*.
[41] *Ibid*, 127. Munziger is quoting Engberg-Pedersen, who is referencing Cicero's *De Finibus* (3.21) to make this claim.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] Landazuri, *op. cit.*, 140.
[44] Munziger, *op. cit.*, 129.

Engberg-Pedersen's description of 'upwards movement'[45] into three aspects which he directly relates to discernment and are almost identical to Tolmie's three aspects which he extracts from Paul's letter to the Galatians: (1) the role of choice; (2) the role of observation and imitation; and (3) how the 'god in you' helps [46] (reflection, choice, and relationship to God according to Tolmie).

Finally, I would like to pay some attention to Plato's view on allegorical interpretation and the role of myths. In her article *Allegorical Interpretation and Place of Myth in Plato*: Status Quaestionis, Magdalena Wdowiak points out that while Plato is very critical of myths and their application to one's life due to their evil nature [47], he does not outright condemn them if used in the proper context:

Censored myths (Εγκριθεντας) are capable of having a paideutical value and serving the soul's formation (πλάττειν τάς ψυξάς αυτών τοις μυθοις). While being under the true *lógos*, they can "point out" the way of life (άποδειξαι, σημαίνει) (Gor. 527b), "persuade" (πειθώμεθα) (Rep. 621c), give "the great hope" (ελπίς μεγάλη) (Fed. 114c) and convey the right ethical rules [48].

According to Wdowiak, Plato judges a myth to be either true or false depending on if it agrees with the "philosophical paradigm."[49] In contrast with Plato's doubtfulness of the philosophical value of myths, Illaria Ramelli positions the allegorical interpretation of myths and poetry in Stoicism as extremely important; for the Stoics, "allegory was *philosophy*" and not simply a rhetorical device [50]. It was common among Stoic authors such as Chrysippus, Zeno and Cleanthes to write commentaries and perform exegesis on popular myths and poetry [51].

Cleanthes believed that rational discourse was lacking in its ability to convey the truth found in the contemplation of divine realities;

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[45] *Ibid.,* 130. According to Munziger, this upwards movement is "the ordering of one's life in order to attain a single, comprehensive grasp (of the *telos*)."
[46] *Ibid*., 131.
[47] Magdalena Wdowiak, "Allegorical Interpretation and Place of Myth in Plato: *Status Quaestionis*," *Classica Cracoviensia* 20, (2017): 221.
[48] *Ibid*., 222.
[49] *Ibid*., 224.
[50] Illaria Ramelli, "The Philosophical Stance Stance of Allegory in Stoicism and Its Reception in Platonism, Pagan and Christian: Origen in Dialogue with the Stoics and Plato," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18, No. 3 (2013): 336.
[51] *Ibid*. For example, Zeno's commentaries on Homer and Hesiod, Cleanthes' allegorical interpretation of archaic poetry and Chrysippus' exegesis of Orpheus, Musaeus, Home and Hesiod.

poetry and music were better equipped to reach these heights [52]. Chrysippus theorizes allegoresis in Book 1 of his *On Divinities* by identifying allegory as a part of theology; he says that truth can be expressed through "philosophers, poets, and 'legislators', or institutors or norms and customs, including rituals." [53] since there is one truth (Logos), the truth communicated in these different forms are necessarily one, but must be allegorically interpreted "to detect the truth hidden in them." [54] In Ramelli's estimation, the Stoics were attempting to merge the long-established expressions of theology (poetic, cultic, iconographic) with their own philosophy in order to both legitimize them and negate the rationalistic view which undervalued them [55].

As I have shown, discernment in Plato is linked to his understanding of the fallen state of humans and the recollection of their prior knowledge through purification, training, and intense inquiry. This process of recollection requires a transformation of the individual, something which we similarly find in Stoicism but with an emphasis on the transformation from personal pre-occupation to communal pre-occupation. Finally, while Plato is critical of myths, he acknowledges that they may contain truth if guided by the Logos. Stoicism accepts myths, poetry, and other classic expressions of theology as vehicles of truth which cannot be properly conveyed through rational discourse.

Discernment in Origen of Alexandria

After having analyzed Pauline, Platonic and Stoic thought, I have identified several potential roots of discernment. In this section, I will relate these findings to Origen's *De Principiis* (and other works through secondary sources) to determine how they may have influenced Origen's own understanding and articulation of it. I will begin with comparing Origen's anthropology to Plato and Paul. I will then compare transformation and self-knowledge in Origen to all three sources. I will then be able to relate discernment in Origen to Tolmie's three aspects of discernment which he has highlighted and Paul (and which Engberg-Pedersen has shown in Stoicism). Finally, I will show how Origen appropriated discernment to the task of scriptural interpretation.

As I have done with Plato, I will begin with Origen's anthropology, which carries a combination of Pauline and Platonic influence. For Origen, an individual is composed of three parts: spirit,

[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *Ibid.*, 337.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*, 340.

soul and body (such as in 1 Thess 5:23) [56]. The spirit is "a created participation in the Holy Spirit;" as such, it is the individual's point of connection with the Holy Spirit as well as the "locus" of its presence and influence in their life [57]. The spirit, although in communication with the soul, is separate from it and does not participate in sin [58]. The soul, which is itself subdivided into two: the higher part and the lower part. The higher part, which Origen calls the *nous* (intellect) is similar to Plato's understanding of the same term. Like Plato, Origen's *nous* is what allows for discernment in our fallen state. For Plato, the *nous* regains through recollection its capacity for discernment and contemplation of Forms by conforming to its original state (pure, detached from the body). For Origen, the *nous*' ability to discern, contemplate "invisible things" [59] and participate in the image of God (Christ, the Logos) is possible inasmuch as it has conformed to the mind (or *nous*, intellect) of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) [60]. Thus, discernment occurs in "the interaction between the spirit and the higher part of the soul." [61] Origen articulates a similar theory to recollection in that the process of conforming to the mind of Christ as "returning to his former place" after having forgotten everything [62]. The lower part of the soul is the soul in its weakened state, susceptible to sin and bodily desires [63]. This part of the soul is not inherently sinful and has the potential to be brought into cooperation with the higher part of the soul [64]. Finally, the body is the necessary vessel of the soul within creation [65] and, like all matter, is corruptible and the origin of our sins [66].

It is clear that Origen's principle of discernment contains similarities to those which I have presented so far. One similarity, which I alluded to in the above paragraph, is that the individual human soul is capable of discernment to the extent that it has undergone a

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[56] Paul B. Decock, "Discernment in Origen of Alexandria," *Acta Theologica* 33, No. 17 (2013): 195.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *De Principiis* (*DP*) 1.1.7
[60] Decock, *op. cit.*, 195.
[61] *Ibid.*,196.
[62] *DP*, 1.3.8; 1.4.1.
[63] Decock, *op. cit.*,196.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] *Ibid.*; *DP*, 2.2.2: Even before the fall, the human intellect had a spiritual body. "[…] it is impossible for this point to be at all maintained, viz., that any other nature than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can live without a body."
[66] *DP*, 2.3.2.; 2.2.2.

transformation to conform more and more to the mind of Christ [67]. For Plato this transformation is a conforming to our initial state; for the Stoics, it is the conforming to reason. This transformation is especially related to Stoicism in that self-knowledge is emphasized: for Origen, the self-knowledge that is required for this transformation is the knowledge of our own "defects," [68] as well as the recognition that we are made in the image of God and as such, our nature is suited to "the contemplation and understanding of God." [69] To the extent that the individual recognizes this about themselves, they will exert themselves towards what they believe is the highest good. If they are completely ignorant, they will direct themselves towards their "own pleasures and bodily lusts." [70] A step up from complete ignorance is the individual who "studies to care or provide for the general good" and will "exert himself for that, whatever it is, which may seem certainly to promote the public advantage;" [71] note the similarity here with the Stoic transformation from the personal preoccupation to the communal one. Finally, the individual who understands their nature inquires incessantly into truth to "ascertain the causes and reason of things." [72] This desire to seek truth was instilled by God so that we may find gratification in the divine Scripture [73], with ultimate consummation only possible after death [74].

For Origen, discernment is not only a by-product of continued conformity to the mind of Christ; it is an essential exercising of one's free will in order to further this endeavour [75]. In line with Paul, Origen acknowledges an important dimension of discernment as the ability to distinguish between good and evil [76], as well as the "inspiration from the good spirits, in contrast to the inspiration by evil spirits." [77] We may

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[67] Decock, *op. cit.*, 206.
[68] *DP*, 3.1.12.
[69] Decock, *op. cit.*, 192; *De Principiis* 2.11.7. This is similar also to Plato in that as we conform to our initial state, we remember that the contemplation of the Forms is the highest of pursuits.
[70] *DP*, 2.11.1.
[71] *DP*, 2.11.1.
[72] *DP*, 2.11.1.
[73] *DP*, 2.11.4.
[74] *DP*, 2.11.6: "And a zeal or desire for knowledge of this kind being conceived by us on earth, the full understanding and comprehension of it will be granted after death […]."
[75] Decock, *op. cit.*, 206.
[76] *Ibid*., 193.
[77] *Ibid*., 199.

also, as Tolmie has with Paul (and Engberg-Pedersen with the Stoics), identify the dimensions of choice and relationship with God in Origen's principle of discernment in this way: distinguishing between good and evil requires a judgement (choice) based on the openness of the spirit and its ability "to accept divine guidance from the Holy Spirit and the Logos" (relationship with God) [78]. We can identify Tolmie's dimension of reflection in that for Origen, we must reflect on our nature to begin this process. Similar to Paul and Plato, our transformation and ability to discern requires a process of purification [79]. It also requires training [80] and intense inquiry [81], as seen in Plato.

The most significant use of discernment, for Origen, was its appropriation for Scripture. For Origen, Scripture is "the permanent incarnation of the Logos" [82] and "the only temporal gospel." [83] Scripture purposefully contained metaphors, allegories and

[78] *Ibid*., 193.

[79] *DP,* 3.6.1: "it is made a question by some whether the nature of bodily matter, although cleansed and purified, and rendered altogether spiritual, does not seem either to offer an obstruction towards attaining the dignity of the (divine) likeness, or to the property of unity, because neither can a corporeal nature appear capable of any resemblance to a divine nature which is certainly incorporeal […]"; 3.6.4: "We ought not, however, to doubt that the nature of this present body of ours may, by the will of God, who made it what it is, be raised to those qualities of refinement, and purity, and splendour (which characterize the body referred to), according as the condition of things requires, and the deserts of our rational nature shall demand."

[80] *DP,* 3.1.10: "From which it follows that every one's will, if untrained, and fierce, and barbarous, is either hardened by the miracles and wonders of God, growing more savage and thorny than ever, or it becomes more pliant, and yields itself up with the whole mind to obedience, if it be cleared from vice and subjected to training"; 3.1.4: "Finally, if to any men of learning, strengthened by divine training, allurements of that kind present themselves, remembering immediately what they are, and calling to mind what has long been the subject of their meditation and instruction, and fortifying themselves by the support of a holier doctrine, they reject and repel all incitement to pleasure, and drive away opposing lusts by the interposition of the reason implanted within them;" Decock, *op. cit.,* 202: Decock notes how Origen often cites Hebrews 5:14.

[81] *DP,* 2.11.4: "and, because their minds are directed to the study and love of the investigation of truth, are they made fitter for receiving the instruction that is to come […]."

[82] Paul B. Decock, "Origen's Theological and Mystical Approach to the Scriptures in the Introduction to His Commentary on John's Gospel," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 45, No. 2 (2011): 680.

[83] *Ibid.*

interpretative difficulties which were meant to stimulate the reader to search for the true meaning [84]. At the very least, we may draw a comparison with Plato's acknowledgement that allegory, under the true Logos, may reveal philosophical truth, as well as the importance of allegory for the Stoics in conveying what simple rhetoric could not. For Origen, we are too initially too weak to discover "the hidden splendour of the doctrines" that lies underneath the "common and unattractive phraseology." [85]He attributes this and all false statements about God to a misunderstanding of Scripture and ignorance of its "spiritual meaning." [86]

He proposes a threefold manner in which one may proceed to discern the truth hidden in Scripture: just as the soul has three parts (the flesh, soul and spirit), so does Scripture [87]. When interpreting, the individual must "portray the ideas of holy Scripture in a threefold manner upon his own soul." [88] This is significant, as Origen is suggesting that because discernment is the faculty of the higher part of the soul, we must internalize the words and appropriate them. This is also because as we interpret the text, we are simultaneously being edified by it. In discerning the Scriptures, we are furthering ourselves on the spiritual path; we see this in how Origen links each of these three levels of interpretation with the three stages of the spiritual life.

We begin at the level of the flesh, at which we edified by the flesh of Scripture and are able to understand the "obvious (literal, historical) sense" of Scripture; this is the stage of moral purification. Those who are farther along the spiritual path may interpret Scripture at the level of the soul, at which they are edified by its soul; this is the stage of illumination, "which is about recognizing the difference between what is eternal and what is passing." [89] We may also draw a comparison here

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[84] Frances Young, "The 'mind' of Scripture: Theological Readings of the Bible in the Fathers," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, No. 2 (2005): 129.

[85] *DP*, 4.x.7; Comm. Jo. 1.24: "How great, then, must be our understanding, that we may be able to understand in a worthy manner the word which is stored in the earthen treasures of paltry language, whose written character is read by all who happen upon it, and whose sound is heard by all who present their physical ears? What also must we say? For who will understand these matters accurately must say truthfully, "'But we have the mind of Christ, that we may know the graces that have been given us by God.'"

[86] *DP*, 4.x.9

[87] *DP*, 4.x.11

[88] *DP*, 4.x.11

[89] Decock, "Origen's Theological and Mystical Approach," 680.

with Plato's eternal Forms and the ability to discern knowledge about them. Finally, those who are perfect (Origen here references 1 Cor 2:6–7) may be edified by the "spiritual law" and understand the spiritual sense of Scripture [90]; this is the stage in which one achieves "union with God in contemplation and love." [91] It is important to note that although discerning the deeper meaning of Scripture requires training and initiation, for Origen it is still only God who can ultimately reveal these truths to us [92].

Conclusion

As I have shown, and even though the scope is small, Origen surely took much inspiration for his articulation of discernment from Paul, Plato and the Stoics. It is clear that a transformation is needed in order to develop this capacity, the first step of which is self-knowledge. In knowing that one is made in the image of God, one can look past his defects and direct themselves towards higher pursuits. This transformative process requires purification, training, and intense inquiry; as one proceeds along this path, the capacity to discern grows. For Origen, the most significant use of this capacity, was for discerning truth in Scripture. It was in this act that one was able to progress on the spiritual path: at first, only being able to understand the literal word; next, the "soul" of Scripture and finally, its Spirit. At each stage, the individual is being transformed by Scripture to resemble the Logos and acquire the Mind of Christ. In a further study, it will be useful to look at more of Origen's works themselves, as well as more primary sources of Plato and the Stoics. Additionally, as I believe discernment can be found even in recent philosophical and theological works [93], it would like to explore how discernment has evolved from antiquity until now.

[90] *DP,* 4.x.11

[91] Decock, "Origen's Theological and Mystical Approach," 681.

[92] *DP,* 4.x.23

[93] In particular, I would like to explore Bernard Lonergan's levels of consciousness and how it has evolved the concept of discernment.

It Still Moves: Separate Emphases in the Making of the Composite Character of St. Basil the Great

Scott Royle

Introduction

ST. BASIL'S CONVICTION, character, and piety have been written about since the days shortly following his death and among these writings are counted funeral orations, letters, vitae, and modern-day biography. Anthony Meredith says in fact that "with the exceptions of Cicero and St Augustine, we probably know more about [St Basil] than about any other ancient writer." [1] A theme worth exploring among these accounts is Basil's relationship with the Holy Spirit – while as a theologian he was a known defender and champion of the Holy Spirit's consubstantial place within the Trinity, we evidence as well, through particular vitae, the ways in which the Holy Spirit acts as an intercessory device through Basil's own pious life and actions. This paper will examine two *vitae* of St. Basil, one being the eulogic "Oration 43" by Basil's close friend, and fellow Church Father, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the other being the 10th century English abbot Aelfric of Eynsham's "Life of St. Basil."

The vitae were written roughly six centuries apart and, while sharing many of the particulars of Basil's life, diverge somewhat in their emphasis on Basil's "miraculous" works; Aelfric's *vita* is much shorter than Gregory's and centres almost completely on the intercession of the Holy Spirit in exciting and dramatic fashion whereas Gregory's work surveys Basil's life as a whole and paints even the most mundane

[1] Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 20.

actions of Basil as worthy of a Saint. The purpose of this paper is to identify and compare the intercession of the Holy Spirit through Basil indicated by the miracles, narrative devices, and elements of virtue in each author's work.

In order to do this we will look at each work in turn for a general characterization of the *vitae*, then discuss the differences between the extraordinary elements in the work of Aelfric and the mundane elements in Gregory's *vita*, discern how these seemingly oppositional elements of extraordinary and mundane are narratively developed in the respective *vitae*, and, finally, whether or not the intercession of the Holy Spirit, as understood through the *vitae* of Basil, is apparent in each of these separate approaches, with special attention paid to the idea of *imitatio Christi* within each *vitae*.

Two *Vitae*

1. Aelfric of Eynsham

Aelfric of Eynsham was a 10th century Anglo-Saxon abbot whose prolific works span from hagiography to biblical commentaries, to sermons. He wrote in the Old English of the time and authored a select number of sermons on the saints that were delivered as commemorative pieces on a respective saints' day. The collection of these particular sermons is known as Aelfric's Lives of the Saints and includes the January 1st submission on our saint in question, Basil the Great. Basil's growing repute and adoration had begun to spawn a Basilic cult in Anglo-Saxon church society at the time so it is no surprise that Aelfric would write a homily in the Cappadocian's honour. The work itself does not attempt a linear and encompassing biographical tale but instead Aelfric patches together segments of Basil's life and works into a quilt of exhalation and wonder, reading similar to a Gospel – pieces of history, some fantastical works, glaring oversights, and peculiar additions. Further sections will deal in particular with the specifics of the intercessory role of the Holy Spirit in Aelfric's writing of Basil, but for now we can pinpoint a few pieces of interest in the "Life of Saint Basil" that give us some intimation of Aelfric's writing style and reverence for his subject.

One of the earliest passages in Aelfric's "Life of Saint Basil," gives us a glimpse of Basil as a younger man, upon his acceptance for tutelage by his teacher; "And Eubolus, the philosopher, who was there the foremost in wisdom, received the boy, because he was inquisitive,

into his erudite school, and he learned there so well that the

philosopher wondered at his understanding." [2] This is of curiosity because, though writing in the 10th century, Aelfric seems to model this early section of hagiography on Hellenistic biographical writings of the early first millennia in which it would be characteristic to speak little-to-nothing on the early childhood portion of a subject's life unless speaking of a subject's education or holdfast to learning. Similarly, in the Bible itself, Luke writing in a Hellenistic biographical style mentions very little of Jesus' youth except to note the boy's intelligence, especially amongst men much older than him.

As Basil grows into maturity it is noted that mere knowledge and the power of his intellect alone is not satisfactory and that what Basil yearned for was a connection with God. Aelfric relates this, saying, "but the teaching which was without faith could not inform the studious youth concerning his Creator whom he was seeking, though that teaching could not tell him." [3] Basil turns then fully towards God and reorients his intellectual prowess in that very devotional direction, but not without some trepidation; Basil wanted some sign from God, and it is here that Aelfric notes the first indications of the Holy Spirit's special place within Basil's story, "Behold! Then suddenly fire came from heaven, and a shining dove darted out of the fire into the river, and stirred the water, and afterward flew straightway to Heaven, and Basil went immediately out of the font-bath, and the bishop clothed him, wondering at the sign." [4] The implications of this passage are far reaching, full of metaphor and symbolism: the dove as a common representation of the Holy Spirit but also as a Phoenix, indicating a change and rebirth in Basil; that this happened in the river Jordan, the very river of Jesus' baptism; Basil's "baptism" in the font-bath as he himself has been made anew; and finally, the wonderment at the "sign," a common indication in the Gospels of the presence of a miracle.

On a final note of interest on Aelfric's inclusions in his "Life of Saint Basil," is the indication of imperfection in Basil. The aspect that warrants attention is that it is only through Basil's own words that Aelfric allows himself any space to denote anything other than the utmost of virtue toward the saint. In a passage near the end of the work Basil is visiting the desert abbot Ephrem, a man whom Basil holds in high esteem. During their meeting Basil asks why Ephrem, with all his

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[2] Aelfric, and Walter W. Skeat, "Life of Saint Basil," in *Aelfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church; Volume I, Chapters I-XXIII* (London: Published for the Early English Text Society, Oxford University Press, 1966), 51.

[3] *Ibid.*, 53.

[4] *Ibid.*, 55.

virtues, does not become a mass-priest? To the question, Ephrem answers "Because I am sinful" to which Basil makes his own reply, "Oh, if I had but thy sins only!" [5]

2. Gregory of Nazianzus

Perhaps the most important thing to understand when viewing Gregory of Nazianzus' writing on St. Basil is that they were known to one another. Not just known, but close, intimate friends and confidants. Gregory, like Basil, hailed from Cappadocia and both went abroad at the same time for further education in Athens. Later, Basil would call upon Gregory in assisting to minister to regional congregations under Basil's care. Alongside Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa, they would fight heresy, exchange letters and theological ideas, and continue to foster a close and important personal connection. Gregory's "Oration 43," therefore, is unsurprisingly an emotional and praiseful eulogy to commemorate the passing of a man who was like a brother to him; it is important to keep in mind that, as noted by Christopher A. Beeley, "Oration 43" is "not an example of unadulterated historical accuracy" [6] but the work of a close, and well-meaning friend. As noted in the section before, particular instances of the Holy Spirit's intercession in "Oration 43" will be looked at in a later section, with this particular section relegated to viewing the eulogy in order to understand some of the particularities of Gregory's writing; its style, how highly the role of virtue is placed, and its cementation of Basil's legacy.

Speaking of Basil as a young man in Caesarea, Gregory writes "what renown he won in a short time from all, both of the common people, and of the leaders of the state; by showing both a culture beyond his years, and a steadfastness of character beyond his culture." [7] Almost immediately in his "Oration 43" Gregory is setting Basil apart by indication that he had somehow "transcended." The transcendence here is a virtuous one; Basil is both mature in intellect to be so well learned for his youthful age but also mature in spirit, to realize perhaps that it is not his goal to be in the favour of society but be within the favour of God.

While Basil was known as a great theologian and political

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[5] *Ibid.*, 81.

[6] Christopher A. Beeley, "The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present," *Modern Theology* 26, no. 1 (January 2010): 92.

[7] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration 43," in *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen: Sometime Archbishop of Constantinople*, Browne, Charles Gordon, and James Edward Swallow, trans (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, PDF), 729.

champion of the church, and is dutifully praised as such by Gregory, the Bishop of Nazianzus focuses much of the attention of his eulogy on Basil as a man of the people with his primary concern and attention placed firmly on the most in need. Gregory says that "by his word and advice he opened the stores of those who possessed them, and so, according to the Scripture dealt food to the hungry, satisfied the poor with bread, and fed them in the time of dearth, and filled the hungry souls with good things." [8] Gregory describes a man who tried both academia and the solitary life of a monk, but ultimately was called back to attend his flock.

Gregory's depiction of Basil's love for the needy displays an almost socialist understanding of the economics of care. As well as an understanding that to care for the soul one cannot ignore the body and that the health of both create the comfort of the individual. Gregory recalls that "he attended to the bodies and souls of those who needed it, combining personal respect with the supply of their necessity, and so giving them a double relief." [9] Gregory gives us the character of Basil as *imitatio Christi* not in him being the Moses-like breaker of chains, but the shepherd among his sheep; seeing himself as protector, doctor, guide, and, perhaps most importantly, one whom suffers for the good of his community. Gregory notes this in saying, "the good or ill success of an individual is of no consequence to the community, but that of the community involves of necessity the like condition of the individual. With this idea and purpose, he who was the guardian and patron of the community, he, I say, was consequently in agony and distress from many wounds." [10]

Extraordinary & Mundane

Basil on the Holy Spirit

While the purpose of this paper isn't so much to understand Basil's own ideas of the Holy Spirit as it is to interpret how the Holy Spirit might work through Basil in the accounts of Aelfric and Gregory of Nazianzus, something should be said on the subject of the Holy Spirit itself and it just so happens that Basil was entrenched in the topic throughout his career and wrote one of theology's best known works on the subject. Basil's appropriately titled *On the Holy Spirit* is described by Kei Yamamura as "a book on the 'word; spoken between God and

[8] *Ibid.*, 805.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid.*, 808-9.

man." [11] The work was written as a defence of the Holy Spirit as consubstantial with the other two persons of the Trinity in response to the Anomoian Arianism of Eunomius of Cyzicus who asserted a unique nature of Jesus Christ which therefore indicated a separation of natures of the three persons of the Trinity. On the Holy Spirit deals in some part with the personhood of Christ before turning to Basil's conceptions of the Holy Spirit; it is important to note that while he asserts the consubstantive nature of the Holy Spirit, Basil never fully elucidates on the particulars of the Holy Spirit, a point for which he received some criticism, even from his close friend Gregory of Nazianzus.

Basil understood that the Holy Spirit was a difficult concept to fully understand, and that it was often relegated to simply rest in the realm of mystery, but also that it was a question and concept that was important to pursue, saying that "indeed it is not the case that because questions seem insignificant, they should be overlooked. Rather, because the truth is hard to grasp, we must search for it in every way." [12] Basil recognized a function of the Holy Spirit that too often went unappreciated – it was a force through which the things of our created world came to encounter and be embraced by God. For Basil the Holy Spirit, as Anthony Meredith writes, "perfects all things, but above all, rational creatures, angels, and human beings, by forming them in virtue." [13]

David W. Gillooly expands upon Meredith's point in saying that for Basil "the intelligible essence seems to be a generous Spirit, one who turns to all in need of sanctification, giving the type of guidance that will lead each of us to the perfect natural ending." [14] For Basil the Holy Spirit works within creation to lead it to its ultimate virtuous goal of sanctification and in the process of which performs the most mysterious of duties, which Basil lists as "creation, working miracles, healing, expelling demons, forgiving sins, and raising the dead." [15] It is hard for us not to point in the direction of modalism to some degree, ie., there being particular powers or responsibilities unique to the Holy Spirit, but that is not Basil's point, his point is rather that it is the Holy

[11] Kei Yamamura, "Development of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Patristic Philosophy: St Basil and St Gregory of Nyssa," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1974): 13.
[12] St Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit,* translated by Stephen M. Hildebrand (Yonkers: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 28.
[13] Meredith, *The Cappadocians,* 30.
[14] David W. Gillooly, "The Divinity of the Holy Spirit in the Theory of Basil the Great," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 1, no. 1 (Spr 1978): 13.
[15] *Ibid.*, 14.

Spirit is the embrace of God's Trinitarian power. He sums it up in On the Holy Spirit by saying that "...whoever hears 'spirit' cannot impress on his mind a circumscribed nature, or one subject to changes and alterations, or one at all similar to creation. Rather, he must advance to the highest heights in his thoughts and conceive of a necessary, intellectual substance that is infinite in power, unlimited in greatness, immeasurable by time or ages, and generous with the goods that it has. Everything that needs holiness turns to him." [16]

The Extraordinary in Aelfric

In Aelfric's account, the "Life of Saint Basil," the intercession of the Holy Spirit is done in a obvious manner through the recounting of various miracle stories. The miracle stories themselves are almost all supernatural in nature, physics defying, and create a Gospel-like appreciation of Basil in his awe-inspiring capabilities. The fact that Basil takes no direct responsibility or praise for these abilities is an indication of his role as conduit of the Holy Spirit in Aelfric's account. Aelfric's *vita* itself was based on various unknown Latin texts and highly edited, as the Aelfric scholar Gabriella Corona points out: "Aelfric, recognizing the discontinuity of the Latin text, rearranged the structure of its translation in order to create a fluent sequence of miracles, grouping thematically-related episodes enhancing the pedagogical force of the hagiography." [17] In this section we will examine some of these miracle stories in Aelfric for their extraordinary qualities.

In one story Aelfric recounts Basil's encounter with the emperor Julian who, angered with the Cappadocian, promises upon his return from battle to level the region to the ground. In a vision during prayer Saint Mary comes to Basil asking for the martyr Mercurius to be dispatched to kill the emperor, however Mercurius cannot locate his weaponry. Aelfric relays what happens next through the proxy of an onlooker; "Julian was encamped by the river Euphrates, and a sevenfold guard watched over him; then came a warrior unknown to us all, strongly armed, and immediately pierced him through with awful assault, and was not seen afterward; then Julian cried out with blasphemy, and miserably died." [18] The mystery is present in the story by the question of who, or what, it was that killed Julian - another

[16] St Basil, *On the Holy Spirit,* 53.
[17] Gabriella Corona, ed., *Aelfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 93.
[18] Aelfric, "Life of Saint Basil," 67.

solider dispatched? A separate mercenary? The intercessory quality of the Holy Spirit becomes evident however when later, once again checking the cache for his weapons, Mercurius reports that the weapons had astonishingly returned to the very spot he had previously searched but now "foul stained with Julian's blood." [19]

On another occasion, the emperor Valens took an important church away from the true believers and gave it to a heretical sect who had deceived him into ownership. Basil and his followers protested this injustice and made a wager with the heretics: the church would be locked and the heretics given three days and nights to pray upon its doors. If God granted them his grace the doors would open to them, if not Basil's party would be given just one night to pray upon the doors to see if it would open to their petition. While the heretics steadfastly prayed, the doors remained locked as Aelfric says, "Christ heard them not, because they knew Him not." [20] Being their turn, Basil and his followers began their prayer to which the doors immediately opened with a wild force of nature imbued with the Holy Spirit; "then suddenly came a great wind, and threw open the door, so that the bolts burst, and it struck against the wall." [21]

A final example indicates a degree of *imitatio Christi* in the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit through Basil in Aelfric's *vitae*: Basil visits a priest for whom he has a high esteem, and the priest brings him to a man he has locked away in a cave, hidden from the world due to his leprous and ill state. At the door the priest refuses to undo the lock for Basil, afraid of the disease the man carries. Then, as Aelfric recounts, Basil opens the door "easily by his word, and watched all the night with the destitute leper, praying the Saviour that He would heal him, and led him forth in the morning of a very fair aspect, without any spot, and speaking well." [22] While mirroring Christ-like acts from the Gospels, the healing power is never attributed directly to Basil, but instead to the Holy Spirit through Basil's prayers of intercession.

The Mundane in Gregory of Nazianzus

Unlike Aelfric's *vitae*, Gregory's doesn't engage in the realm of the supernatural in recounting miracle stories of Basil that might seem hard for the contemporary reader to believe – though at times he does approach the idea of Basil's direct guidance at the hand of some

[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*, 71.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*, 79.

intercessory device. What we have instead is an oration that applauds the various aspects of Basil's virtuous life and an insistence that the man was blessed with an uncharacteristic grace and presence that can be attributed to an overall, lifelong, intercession of the Holy Spirit. Gregory says that "Basil's beauty was virtue, his greatness theology, his course the perpetual motion reaching even to God by its ascents, and his power the sowing and distribution of the Word." [23] While the acts of Basil might seem ordinary, even compulsory for a Bishop, it is Gregory's insistence that his displays of theological understanding and care for his fellow man permeated with a quality of one who is touched in God's favour. We will look at some of these displays of character in the paragraphs that follow.

Gregory takes great care to instill in the reader Basil's attention to the needy, making several references to his care of the sick, hungry, and mistreated. This care was not just a material care, though that was there too, but one of a spiritual nature toward those who needed it the most. Gregory says that Basil "attended to the bodies and souls of those who needed it, combining personal respect with the supply of their necessity, and so giving them a double relief." [24] We evidence through Gregory the ongoing quality of Basil's virtuous striving in an ongoing life within the spirit and *imitatio Christi*, as "Basil's care was for the sick, and the relief of their wounds, and the imitation of Christ, by cleansing leprosy, not by a word, but in deed." [25]

The other way that Gregory expresses the graced character of Basil is through the saint's theological capabilities. For Gregory, this ability of Basil's is not simply the product of years of earnest study alone, but the fruition of this study simultaneously immersed in the Holy Spirit; "Who, more than he, cleansed himself by the Spirit, and make himself worthy to set forth divine things? Who was more enlightened by the light of knowledge, and had a closer insight into the depths of the Spirit, and by the aid of God beheld the things of God?" [26] Gregory walks the line on this subject, or rather he places Basil on the line of being both far-beyond most men in academic learning and abilities in theology, while indicating that this ability was further enhanced, and eventually overtaken, by the intercessory activity of the Holy Spirit, saying, "his ideas were super-human, and having, before his death, become superior to worldly influences, his only interests were

[23] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration 43," 822.
[24] *Ibid.*, 805.
[25] *Ibid.*, 820.
[26] *Ibid.*, 821.

those of the spirit." [27] Eventually, the value of Basil's virtue to himself became of primary importance and we evidence through Gregory's *vita* a transcendence beyond the mind, public accolades, or material goods, saying of Basil, that "his wealth was the having nothing, and he thought the cross, which he lived, more precious than great riches." [28]

Variance in Emphases

In this section I will examine in turn both Aelfric and Gregory's characterization of Basil as expressed through the intercessory device of the Holy Spirit by noting key components in each author's narrative styles. As we have noted in previous sections the manner in which each author goes about this is quite different; Aelfric portrays Basil by utilizing various specific miracle stories while Gregory chooses to render a broader perspective of Basil as a man imbued with a grace-given, but cultivated, virtue displayed through his learnedness and devotion to the community. I pinpoint three oppositional characteristics in each of the two writings in order to understand the difference in narrative method between the authors. It is important to note that they are not oppositional in the sense that either are contradictory to Basil's hagiography, but rather different in emphases.

Aelfric

What follows is a treatment of three particular characteristics of Aelfric's *vita*:

1. **Liminality**: An aspect of Aelfric's *vita* is that it deals with works of Basil almost exclusively for their liminal temporal quality. While Aelfric does give some precedent biographical information on Basil, as well as a degree of knowledge on the overall character and life of Basil, for the most part it interacts with specific miracle stories that come in and out of being at a specific time and space. This is evidenced through the stories themselves - as we have already seen most of the miracle stories happen at a particular location and have a specific and, generally, short-lived, start-and-stop: Basil begins prayer for the opening of the locked church doors, a wind comes, the doors open; Basil comes to a locked-up man with leprosy, prays upon him, guides him out of his encampment healthy and free of disease. The emphasis on the ephemeral quality of time is evident even in the language Aelfric uses, in particular the word "suddenly" is used at various instances: such as when the Holy Spirit appeared upon Basil's asking for a sign

[27] *Ibid.*, 817.
[28] *Ibid.*, 818.

from God, as Aelfric says "Behold! Then **suddenly** fire came from heaven, and a shining dove..." [29]; or when the heretic Valens' ill son dies in the emperor's arms, "While the heretics thus deceived him, the child died **suddenly** in their hands." [30] These excerpts indicate in Aelfric an appreciation and emphasis on liminality as a narrative device to indicate the sudden, powerful, and passing intercession of the Holy Spirit.

2. **Supernatural**: As we have evidenced thus far, most of the miracle stories recounted by Aelfric's *vita* of Basil include some sort of supernatural element: fires from heaven, mysterious mercenaries, and great winds bursting bolts of church doors. There is even a story of Basil's encounter with a devil that he is attempting to exercise out of a young man who had made an ill-advised pact with the demon. Basil prays upon the boy until finally "there came the bloodthirsty devil, desiring to snatch the youth from Basil's hands, pulling vehemently, and said to the saint that he had robbed him." [31] While "other-worldly" these various supernatural elements aid greatly in Aelfric's desire toward reverence of Basil as Christ-like in his extraordinary abilities. As well, it acts as a form of sheer entertainment; the narrative device of "shock-and-awe" instills the reader with an appreciation of the saint while keeping them engaged and interested in the overall story.

3.**Anecdotal**: An important take-away from Aelfric's "Life of Saint Basil" is that it does not follow a linear biographical trajectory. While these miracle stories may be in a correct temporal order, they do not tell a start-to-finish life of Basil but instead extract various snippets of extraordinary events of Basil to quilt together an anecdotal series of events that create an an almost vignette-style hagiography. Not only are these stories snippets of life, but few also give us any particulars toward indication of Basil's education, theological works, or humanitarian efforts. In fact, many of the sections of Aelfric's *vitae* take place over the course of mere hours, a day, or a few days at the most.

Gregory of Nazianzus

What follows is a treatment of three particular characteristics of Gregory's *vita*:

1. **Ongoing**: In Gregory, as opposed to Aelfric, we see far less emphasis on near-instantaneous miracle stories in favour of asserting Basil's intercession via the Holy Spirit as a life-long condition. The Nazianzan asserts that Basil was guided through all his life's pursuits:

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[29] Aelfric, "Life of Saint Basil," 55.
[30] *Ibid.*, 69.
[31] *Ibid.*, 77.

the educational, the theological, and the humanitarian via a holy, and steadfast, hand. For Gregory, Basil's *imitatio Christi* was a continued striving toward a virtuous character, not as much in jaw-dropping miraculous performances. To look again at the following quote, we evidence Gregory's insistence on Basil's ongoing pursuit of life in the Spirit; "Basil's beauty was virtue, his greatness theology, his course the perpetual motion reaching even to God by its ascents." [32]

2. **Natural**: For sure there are hints of the supernatural or divine in Gregory's *vita*, but they are just that – hints. And these hints, such as when Gregory speaks of Basil's writing of On the Holy Spirit as "being evidently written by a pen borrowed from the Spirit's store," [33] may be just that, hints toward the activity of a supernatural force, or simply poetic, metaphoric, devices of praise and appreciation for Basil's insight and skill. Either way, these hints aside, the overall tome and structure of Gregory's oration excludes any indiction of an active supernatural force in the life and work of Basil. Instead, it places the activity of the Holy Spirit in Basil as a navigational tool of influence that guides where and how Basil places his grace-bestowed compassion and intelligence – theological treatises, the needy, his religious community.

3. **General Characterization**: Perhaps the most significant difference between Aelfric and Gregory's *vitae* is the general structure – while Aelfric chooses to relay the account of Basil's life in a series of anecdotal miracle stories, Gregory's is much fuller in its forming of a general character of Basil the man, theologian, and church leader. While he pays special attention to Basil's humanitarian and theological achievements, the work is filled out with a variety of biographical information such as birthplace and youth, familial and friendship ties, relocations, education, ecclesiastical works, controversies, and ultimately his death. While "Oration 43" is deeply personal and emotional, it nevertheless produces an encompassing and, for the most part, non-partisan hagiography. It reads as though Gregory was keen that the audience understand the extent of Basil's life in order that they should understand the extent of his great progression from a young boy of Cappadocia to a great man of theology to, finally in his grey-haired days, a simple man of faith nearing the end of his time, as when he says of Basil, "[he was] poor and unkempt, yet without ostentation: and taking cheerfully the casting overboard of all that he ever had, sailed lightly across the sea of life." [34]

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[32] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration 43," 822.
[33] *Ibid.*, 823.
[34] *Ibid.*, 818.

Conclusions

The attempt of this paper was to look at two particular *vitae* in order to examine their stark differences in methods of characterization of Saint Basil the Great. It would be hard to find two *vitae* whose circumstances were more dissimilar than those of Aelfric of Eynsham and Gregory of Nazianzus: the former written by a 10th century Anglo-Saxon abbot in reaction to a growing interest in Basil in that region and the latter by a 4th century friend and colleague of Basil's; Aelfric's account being based on unknown Latin sources that had serendipitously made their way to the Anglo-Saxon island, while Gregory's is, of course, a first-hand account of a companionship and witnessed biography.

What we have displayed in this investigation is the important differences between the two *vitae*. Aelfric's hagiography is a collection of anecdotal miracle stories of Basil that contains minimal amounts of the usual biographical information you might expect from a life story. The Abbot strings together various tales of the supernatural qualities surrounding Basil such as his casting-out of demons and healing of lepers. The intercessory force of the Holy Spirit makes itself obvious and full of action and awe. The *imitatio Christi* in Aelfric's Basil is akin to the Gospel imagery of Jesus' own miracle performances, while making it clear by placing of Basil as the "prayer" that it is the Holy Spirt, and not the person of Basil himself, with these extraordinary powers.

Gregory's account shies away from the anecdotal and supernatural qualities displayed in Aelfric. Instead, Gregory recounts the life-story of a friend, mixing together biographical tidbits with personal observations and interactions. Gregory places Basil on a pedestal as an enlightened friend, brother, theologian, and child of God. The *imitatio Christi* in Gregory's telling of Basil lies in a pursuit of a life lived in the Spirit as opposed to powerful and momentary instances of the intercession of the Holy Spirit; a sentiment shared in Gillooly's writing on the Sprit in Basil when he says that "the Spirit is an essence which has power and glory, unlimited, and which cannot be measured in time." [35] In Gregory, Basil was Christ-like not in healing lepers or casting out demons, but by his devotion to his study, his community, the needs of the sick and hungry, and his devotion to God.

We can conclude that, while both accounts of Basil depict a great man of God, they are quite different. Different does not mean

[35] Gillooly, "The Divinity of the Holy Spirit," 13.

oppositional however, nor does it necessarily denote contradiction (though there might be a little of that). Instead, the difference of these accounts lies in a variance of emphasis taken to their limits; Gregory chooses to emphasize the aspect of Basil that learned and grew in knowledge of Christ, in a life-long pursuit to live in his image, and a great power of virtue imbued by the grace of God. For Aelfric, we see a man of similar powers and virtues, but whose gifted grace of the Holy Spirit manifests in a different mode; through instantaneous and supernatural miraculous abilities. Read together they composite a dynamic and interwoven tale that describes a man of great faith and fortitude living a life of the Spirit

Religious Dissent and its Challenges to Medieval Society: A Study of Biblical Interpretation and its Relation to Heretical Doctrine, 1100-1260

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THE TWELFTH and thirteenth centuries can be described as a time of heightened religiosity, where the central tenets of Christianity, administered through various agents like popes, bishops, theologians, and priests, governed the spiritual lives of citizens side-by-side with the royal and secular authorities. Within these tenets, the notion of the Bible as the physical remnant of the Word of God played an important role in the establishment of social order. However, the advent of religious reform in the late 11th century created a spiritually dissatisfied laity, which brought about elements of sectarianism and religious dissent in the mid-to-late 12th century. Essentially, certain dissenting groups, mainly the Cathars of Languedoc, interpreted passages of Scripture differently, coming into conflict with what the church hierarchy had deemed acceptable. The focus of this paper will be to outline the issues concerning heresy in medieval society, and to pinpoint if heretical tendencies were partly caused by a lack in understanding of Scripture, or because of a difference of interpretation. Also, an examination of the concepts of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" must be introduced and contrasted against one another, to evaluate how these "heterodox" and dissenting factions differentiated themselves from the "orthodox"

hierarchy. Primacy must also be given to the development of Catharism in southern France, specifically in the County of Toulouse, from 1140-1260. This study will also discuss the reception of preaching and how the Word of God was communicated to areas of religious dissent, the relationship between literacy and heresy, and the repressive tactics of the Inquisition and its impact on southern French society.

Introduction: The dividing line between "Orthodoxy" and "Heterodoxy": a misinterpretation?

Before underlining the important role the Bible played in the dissemination, and subsequent suppression of religious dissent, defining orthodoxy and heterodoxy (heresy) is of the utmost importance [1]. The elements that clearly differentiated orthodoxy and heresy in the 12th and 13th centuries were not-so evident in early Christianity. During the time of St. Paul, Jesus' death and resurrection were events of the not-so-distant past, and, as theology, an academic discipline that would have aided in answering questions about these events was not yet in existence, it is possible that followers struggled to understand their importance. What did it mean to "follow" Christ? Why did he die and resurrect? How was he the son of God? It is possible that some followers did not see things the same as others, and may have had deeper, more underlying questions that needed to be answered.

Upon examining what St. Paul is describing in 1 Corinthians 18-20, the "factions" and "divisions" that were present within the early Christian communities could have been foreshadowing what was to come [2]. It would take the early church roughly 300 years before attempting to formulate doctrine; and no sooner had it been established, it had to be defended against Arianism at the Council of Nicaea in 325. As such, the hierarchy of the early church displayed a strong sense of intolerance towards the beliefs espoused by Arians, as they had deviated from what was to become the "norm." Interpretation, coupled with tolerance (or intolerance), were elements that determined, post Nicaea, what constituted this "norm", and how it would be further developed into a full-fledged, functional "orthodox" doctrine. Interpretation, in and of itself, was a complex matter, for it brought along with it biases and presuppositions, on both ends of the spectrum. Intolerance, used pejoratively, delineates an idea that differences, whatever they may be, are deemed incorrect; when placed together with basic Christian tenets, these differences can be a cause for someone, or a group, to forfeit their

[1] From this point on, heterodoxy will be referred to as heresy.
[2] *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 1563.

right of membership in a community, in this sense, Christianity, all based on variations in interpretation [3]. Essentially, interpreting a different belief as false might coincide with what James K.A. Smith denotes, that "heresy exists only in so far as authority chooses to declare its existence." [4] When relating the idea of heresy as something created, mainly by the interpretations, or perhaps the misinterpretations of high church officials, it coincides with what Smith has labelled a "phenomenology of judgement." [5] Prior to refuting certain beliefs as false, the person laying on the judgement has already given his biased verdict. The complexities of analyzing Scripture do not help in this regard, and proposing to judge someone as a heretic or dissenter, when claiming to uphold the true doctrine was as erroneous as claiming that your opinion was better than theirs. The diversity of opinions that was present in early Christian communities, and the acceptance of these opinions would not have caused heads to turn as they did in the 12th century. In fact, Smith, who quotes Walter Bauer, denotes that the orthodox party "was simply the victorious faction." [6] By the mid-12th century, reform would become synonymous with dissent, and ideas of tolerance and interpretation would become key aspects in the formulation of orthodox doctrine.

Evidently, as time went on, and as canon law became more rigid in terms of tolerance, the lines between orthodoxy and heresy became less nuanced and clearer. With the advent of reform in the late 11th century, by the mid-12th century the dominant question, in both religious and social life was "how must a Christian live in the world?" [7] This question was difficult to define, and one that can be answered differently when comparing the reformers and dissenters of the 12th century. The reforms not only affected the ecclesiastical caste, but the laity as well, and people looked to enhance their spirituality in a system which now stressed reclusiveness and individuality. The church, its place in the world, the responsiveness and acceptance of the new reforms by its congregants, and the challenges posed by dissenters, dominated the political and cultural landscape of the 12th and early 13th centuries. It is quite ironic to see that what the church attempted to do, the complete opposite happened; the reforms looked to reiterate the

[3] James K.A. Smith, "Fire from Heaven: The Hermeneutics of Heresy," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 20, no.1 (1996): 16.
[4] *Ibid.*, 16.
[5] *Ibid.*, 17.
[6] *Ibid.*, 18.
[7] *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 58.

importance of monastic life, and to withdraw from the world [8]. However, what did that mean for the rest of society that was unable to retract itself from these worldly distractions? Workers, peasants, artisans, tradesmen, and other skilled labourers were very much involved in society, no matter their rank. Whether in a city, town, or village, these people were important to the machinations that made society function. As the laity felt neglected, the few that belonged to the ecclesiastical caste, albeit lower in status, began to strive towards a *vita apostolica*, espoused by the teachings of St. Paul and backed up by Scripture [9].

As previously mentioned, the only reason that reform was synonymous with dissent was because these dissenters had different answers to "how must a Christian live in the world?" [10] These differences caused medieval churchmen, who oversaw the suppressing of any form of religious dissent, to relate these men to the heretics of the past. It was no longer a question of the church being the "most successful heresy" as it was in the 4th century, but a question of crisis; these ideas now deviated from the "norm" and threatened to destabilize the religious and social order the church looked to maintain with the belief in one, unadulterated faith [11]. What sets apart the old heresies from the more recent ones in the 12th century, was the power the church now wielded as a more centralized, and highly bureaucratic organization. By 1250, this power would increase exponentially, to a point where it almost controlled the life and death of spiritual opponents.

Part 2: Contrasting Biblical Interpretations: Literacy, and the advent of religious dissent

A) Literacy and the spread of false doctrine: Dualism

In contrast to the availability of Scripture in today's world, medieval people did not have regular access to the passages and parables of the Bible. The Word of God was diffused through a liturgical lens, usually during weekly attendance at mass. Rarely did people have a physical copy of the Vulgate, and if they did, it was a

[8] *Ibid.*, 59.
[9] *Ibid.*, 61.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Smith, *Fire from Heaven*, 18; See also Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 12.

translated version into the vernacular, which was also extremely rare and very prohibited. Its prohibition coincided with the growth and power of the church in the 12th century, displayed in the controlling and suppression of the circulation of non-accepted versions of the Bible. This bears the question: why were these translations prohibited? If the point of the late 11th century reforms were to bring the laity closer to the church, enhance spiritual tendencies, and impose regular attendance to mass, should this not be welcomed? Scriptural passages would now be readily available to adherents, and if they missed mass, they could read Scripture for spiritual fulfillment in the comfort of their own homes. Astonishingly, this could not be further from the truth. Reformers looked to increase church attendance, and used the office of the parish priest to make sure this was strictly followed. Unattendance would be questioned, as was the circulation of vernacular Bibles, because the church could not control the translations of these Bibles. Seeing as though these translations were effectuated outside the authority of the church, it made the acceptance of vernacular Bibles complicated, and coincided with how they were understood and interpreted.

Prior to the 12th century, literacy outside the ecclesiastical caste was virtually non-existent. Literacy could only be granted through receiving an education, and education was only possible through a monastery, and by the late 11th century, a cathedral school. There are some scholars who suggest that literacy may have been a determining factor in the spread of heresy, which could mean that heretical proponents either infiltrated religious educational systems, or they received a clerical education, and at some point, were turned to follow false teachings. Either way, both Biller and Hamilton suggest that literacy in legal and religious spheres was present in Languedoc towards the last quarter of the 12th century, possibly by transference of ideas and beliefs from Bogomilism, which had penetrated intellectual life in the Byzantine empire [12]. Biller also claims that many business transactions in Toulouse were done in Latin, denoting a certain amount of literacy in the form of economic and monetary dealings [13]. However, this does not mean that all business men were heretics, and this is

[12] Peter Biller, "The Cathars of Languedoc and written materials," in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, ed. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 62; Bernard Hamilton, "Wisdom from the East: the reception by the Cathars of Eastern dualist texts," in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, ed. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 42.

[13] Peter Biller, *op. cit.*, 62.

somewhat of an unrealistic expectation, as Biget claims that not more than 10% of the population in the urban areas of southern France adhered to Catharism [14]. In order to concretely understand literacy and its ties to heresy, an elaboration of Cathar beliefs must be discussed, as well as an examination as to how they made their way to the western world.

It has always been widely believed that Catharism in western Europe was part of a long history of religious dissent that stretched back to Manicheism, and possibly even Gnosticism. Scholarly interpretations of this historical-religious "longue durée" have always assumed that all religious dissenting groups were simply a continuation of one another, a very traditionalist way of thinking and one adopted by many [15]. When attempting correlate where Catharism received its beliefs and tenets from, the first place one tends to look is Bogomilism, a 10th century Bulgarian heresy that survived in the east well into the 12th century. Upon initial analysis, and seeing many similarities in their beliefs, it would seem likely that Bogomilism made its way to the west via conversion missions in the second half of the 12th century by a Bogomil Bishop who was highly placed in the Byzantine church [16]. These beliefs tended to follow a dualistic nature, where two gods existed in the universe; a "good" God of spirit, and an "evil" God of matter [17]. Although this dualism was usually divided into "mitigated" and "absolute", by 1200, Catharism in southern France steered towards the latter; proponents of "absolute" dualism believed in "two principles", one good and one evil, eternally co-existent from the beginning of time [18]. As such, these two principles defined existence, but Cathars concerned themselves only with the "good God" and his creation of an incorruptible, spiritual realm; matter, which was corruptible, coinciding with the world they lived in, was the work of the "evil God", and the only way to escape this world was to receive the only sacramental rite they valued, the *consolamentum* [19]. All these beliefs were delineated from biblical passages that were interpreted to suit their spiritual needs.

[14] *Ibid.* Biller here quotes Jean-Louis Biget, a prominent French historian of heresy, and one that refutes Catharism's potential existence.
[15] Bernard Hamilton is one of these scholars.
[16] Bernard Hamilton, "Wisdom from the East," 45. The bishop in question was the infamous Papa Nicetas of Constantinople.
[17] Andrew Philip Smith, *The Lost Teachings of the Cathars: Their Beliefs and Practices* (London: Watkins, 2015), 38.
[18] *Ibid.*, 39.
[19] *Ibid.*

Firstly, through a lens of Scriptural interpretation, their rejection of the Old Testament was understandable; the God of the Old Testament was strict and vengeful, who punished the guilty [20]. In sticking to their dualistic tendencies, their reasoning for rejecting the OT was based on Matthew 7:18 which stated that "a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit." [21] The part that mentioned the "bad fruit" they associated with the evils of the world, and that it was impossible for the "good God" to create a world such as this.

Secondly, the *consolamentum* was the only sacramental rite the Cathars placed their trust in. In order to obtain this sacrament, believers, or *credentes*, vowed to observe the severely austere way of life of their spiritual superiors, the *perfecti*. This meant that all matters pertaining to fleshly activities, such as sexual relations, and eating food made of coition were prohibited. The *perfecti* were the "heretics" mentioned in later inquisitorial documents, but they only made up an extremely small amount of the population. They were the ones chosen to spread the faith, and in all their wisdom, were held responsible for administering the consolamentum to their fellow *credentes*. Their valuation of the NT as the only authoritative text went even further still; in order to properly administer the rite, a *perfectus* (*perfecta* for a woman) had to hold open the Gospel of John, while the Cathar bishop, the highest elected official of their "church", engaged in a spiritual baptism; not the one involving water, but similar to the one mentioned in Acts 8:14 which stated, "Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." [22] The prominence of the Gospel of John for the ceremony is another area of interest, and it involves examining certain ambiguities within some passages of the gospel that are concerned with baptism. In a discussion Jesus was having with a man named Nicodemus in John 3:5-7, he stressed the importance of being "born of water and the Spirit." [23] Seeing as though the *consolamentum* dictates only the spiritual baptism as having any validity, this is passage is somewhat contradictory. Did Cathars simply choose to disregard the part that mentioned the water, or was this intentionally done because water was part of the material word and was considered evil? It may also pertain to the figure of John the Baptist being considered evil by Cathars, and as he baptized Christ using water, it may have been deemed invalid due

[20] From this point on, Old Testament will be referred to as OT.
[21] *Orthodox Study Bible*, 1280; See also Smith, *The Lost Teachings*, 56; Also, from this point on, the New Testament will be referred to as NT.
[22] *Ibid.*, 1482.
[23] *Ibid.*, 1427.

to his "demoniac" heritage [24]. Because of the contradictory aspects of this passage, a definite answer cannot be given concerning this matter.

The importance of literacy comes into play when examining the social aspects that made the diffusion of heresy somewhat successful in the late 12th century, and even in the early 13th. Biller has identified that wealthy patrons in the Languedoc supported a "Cathar economy" as early as the 1140s, and this may have had a considerable impact in terms of education [25]. Did these patrons, either lords or wealthy merchants, provide funds for educational purposes? Pointing towards different types of textual evidence, legal and financial texts may provide some clarity in this respect. An inquisitorial deposition from 1244 describes a witness being present during the granting of lands "in perpetual rent" by his father – probably a lord – to certain *perfecti* in 1209 [26]. The granting of property would have needed some basic notion of the legal aspects concerning transference of land from one party to another, and as Biller has denoted that notaries and lawyers may have either been *credentes*, or worked under *perfecti* for a wage, this entails a certain level of literacy was needed for such a task [27].

Notarial expertise may have also been needed when drafting official charters concerning ecclesiastical organization. The famous "Cathar council" of St. Félix-de-Caraman which was convened in c. 1167, formally created certain diocesan divisions within the newly formed "Cathar church" of the west. Examples like the dioceses of Carcassonne and Toulouse requiring recorded charters for legitimacy meant that knowledge of canon law, and other elements regarding ecclesial jurisdiction were extremely valuable [28]. Other aspects concerning a proficient literacy in Latin may have influenced heretical teaching. Depositions mention a dissident leader, Bartholomew of Carcassonne, who in 1223 sent out letters to other heretical centers, and was involved in conciliar negotiations and assemblies [29]. For Bartholomew to be labelled as a "dissident leader" it meant that he was possibly a bishop in the "Cathar church." This means that he may have had some formal clerical training, as conciliar assemblies dealt with

[24] Smith, *The Lost Teachings*, 57. Smith offers an interesting interpretation here. Cathar creationism entailed the sending of angelic figures to save the souls that were trapped in the earthly prison. John's father, Zechariah, was sent to earth but he was considered an angel of the evil God, making John the spawn of evil.
[25] Biller, "The Cathars of Languedoc and written materials," 62.
[26] *Ibid.*, 63.
[27] *Ibid.*, 62, 63.
[28] Biller, "The Cathars of Languedoc and written materials," 64-65.
[29] *Ibid.*, 65-6.

reading documents, presenting legislation, and drafting other forms of important documentation.

All these examples mention a certain amount of literary proficiency needed to obtain the knowledge and skillset to perform these tasks. However, did this literary proficiency lead to knowledge of Scripture, and was this knowledge used to spread false teaching? Biller proposes that service books used in certain heretical rituals did exist, and these provide an insight to the level of Scriptural interpretation dissenting groups possessed [30]. Both Biller and Hamilton mention the "Cathar ritual", which survives in two 13th-century translations, one in Latin and the other in Provençal, of the ceremony which confirmed entrance into the sect upon administration of the *consolamentum*; this is also examined in depth by Wakefield and Evans [31]. There has been a substantial amount of debate among scholars as to when this document was commissioned, and this study will not further contribute to this debate. What is of importance is the content of this ritual. Chapter XI of the Latin text discusses the purpose for the formation of this "church" by performing a "holy spiritual baptism", most probably the laying on of hands, for its inductees [32]. This is confirmed as the only proper initiation, accentuated by the words of St. Paul in Ephesians 4:5, "one faith, one Lord, one baptism." [33] Concerning the interpretation of these biblical passages, it is clear that most of them were understood under the context of their beliefs. It would be difficult to pinpoint if both the Latin and Provençal texts had historical precedents, but the fact that they are recorded in writing may be indicative of the existence of an initial copy written sometime before 1230, when Catharism was on the verge of collapse [34]. It is possible that these rituals were recorded because of the sect's imminent disappearance, to preserve the teachings passed down from previous generations. This is possible, but it cannot be confirmed with absolute certainty.

B) Preaching in the "Lord's Vineyard": A response to heretical teaching

If the spread of dualism and false doctrines troubled the church

[30] *Ibid.*, 66-8.
[31] *Ibid.*; Hamilton, "Wisdom from the East," 48. See also, *Heresies of the High Middles Ages*, trans. Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 592-630.
[32] *Ibid.*, 604.
[33] *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 1603; See also, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 605.
[34] *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 592.

hierarchy of the 12th and 13th centuries, the only way to suppress this was to preach the true Word of God. Preaching served to correct anyone believing in false teaching by applying the redemptive qualities the church possessed. The only way to prevent your soul from perishing was to believe in the one true faith; anything outside this was unacceptable. As such, a large array of anti-heretical literature during this period can be divided into four broad categories, claims Kienzle [35].

First, heretical adherents were demonized as being spawns of Satan, instilling a certain amount of fear in people who happen to hear about them [36]. In Sermon 65 on the Song of Songs, Bernard of Clairvaux, described them as "seducing spirits", who were "skilled and experienced in presenting evil under the guise of good." [37] Bernard would become one of the chief proponents of preaching campaigns against the heretics of southern France.

Second, heretics were polluted by their depravity, and could contaminate others by encountering them, or by hearing about what they had to say concerning their beliefs and practices [38]. Another interesting passage in Bernard's sermon demonstrates this: the "Lord's vine…planted by the hand of the Lord, redeemed by his blood, watered by his word, propagated by his grace, and rendered fruitful by his spirit" was in the gravest of danger by the "multitude of its assailants." [39] Here, the "Lord's vine" is an allegorical interpretation of Christendom, and its integrity is being harmed, as well as its purity polluted by these "foxes", who attacked the vine in secret [40].

Third, allowing the spread of heresies to continue would prove detrimental to the stability of society. It was the place of the church in medieval society to make sure that religious order was kept, and heretical practice defies this divinely ordained order, enhanced by centuries of tradition [41]. In Bernard's sermon, he attacked the heretics who hide falsities "in secret" and concert "together their nefarious discourses." [42] Bernard here, was addressing the secretive aspects

[35] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 11.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Heresy and Authority*, 95.
[38] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12.
[39] *Heresy and Authority*, 95.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12; See also Katherine Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion" in *The New Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100-c. 1500*, eds. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 117.
[42] *Heresy and Authority*, 96; See also Mary Dove, "Scripture and reform," in *The*

concerning this heretical doctrine, as he deemed it a necessity to reveal doctrine that glorified God [43]. It is these secretive aspects that destroy the order and stability of Christendom, and Bernard claims that historically, proponents of the true faith did not "keep their gospel secret" and suffered martyrdom for upholding their beliefs [44].

Finally, the instability in the church accentuates the possibility of imminent doom, and elements of apocalypticism are evident in anti-heretical literature [45]. Judgment Day, and the coming of the end times has always been a rhetorical tool used by medieval churchmen to describe the disheartening events happening in their world. With the advent of potential heretical teachings spreading like wildfire, it is understandable that such rhetoric was being produced, to entice the believer to not fall victim to these falsities because their proponents are like "foxes that spoil the vines." [46]

Essentially, for these four categories to not come to fruition, even if they have been described in literary contexts, successful preaching campaigns in the Lord's vineyard were of vital importance. As the 12th century spurred something of a cultural and literary "renaissance", the knowledge received from cathedral and monastic schools was useful for preaching against heresy [47]. The Cistercian order, spearheaded by the most important churchman of the 12th century, Bernard of Clairvaux, took their chance at preaching in southern France to curb the spread of heresy. The reforms of the late 11th century made the differences between clergy and laity less nuanced, and more distinct; this caused distrust in the clergy and the search for a life centered around simplicity, spirituality, and apostolic values was increasingly desirable [48]. While the Cistercian order as a whole, attempted to promote seclusion, austerity, and withdrawal from the evils of the world, Bernard of Clairvaux's actions demonstrated that the exact opposite was needed; Kienzle's description, taken from Bernard's own letters, designated him as "neither cleric nor layman", and as someone who was genuinely

New Cambridge History of the Bible: From 600 to 1450, eds. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 582.

[43] *Ibid*., 97. Here, Bernard uses a passage from Matthew 10:27 to enhance his message: "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops."

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12.

[46] *Heresy and Authority*, 98.

[47] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 25, 26.

[48] *Ibid.*, 29.

concerned with the state of Christendom during his time [49]. Kienzle believes that the church reforms did not have a profound impact in the Languedoc as they did in the northern kingdoms; law, medicine, and science were disciplines that flourished, as opposed to disciplines concerning the trivium and quadrivium in most northern universities and cathedral schools [50]. Kienzle also denotes that heresy may have spread, or it was perceived as such by medieval churchmen, by vernacular poetry produced by troubadours, who had many powerful benefactors like the Counts of Toulouse and Foix [51]. Fulk, who would eventually become bishop of Toulouse and a fierce anti-Catharist proponent, was himself a troubadour before adopting clerical life [52]. The portrayal of immoral, adulterous love in troubadour poetry may have sparked some interest in medieval churchmen to suspect some form of heretical depravity was present in their writings, but nothing has come to serious scholarly fruition concerning this aspect [53].

In order to properly penetrate certain areas that were considered "hotspots" of heresy, Bernard's preaching mission needed a substantial amount of support. In 1145, the Cistercians accepted two new abbeys into their order: Grandselve and Frontfroide both in the Lauragais [54]. As has been previously mentioned, the reform movements caused a serious amount of tension between the clergy and the laity, and this accentuated in the rise of lay preachers, who stressed a return to a simpler form of Christianity, the one purported by apostolic agents in the NT [55]. What did not help was the constant blood feuding and political fragmentation present in the Languedoc at this time; the southern French nobility did not follow traditional forms of primogeniture when land inheritance was concerned, and children of lords often fought their brothers or

[49] *Ibid.*, 29-30.
[50] *Ibid.*, 35-6.
[51] *Ibid.*, 36.
[52] *Ibid.*, 38.
[53] *Ibid.* However, the second part of *Song of the Cathar Wars*, may have been written by an anonymous troubadour; or at least, that is what some scholars think. It has recently been refuted as an impossibility, however interesting the theory might be. William of Tudela, a 13th century cleric in favour of the Albigensian crusade, worked on the first part before he passed away. The anonymous poet or chronicler who continued his work was lighter in his tone concerning the crusade, as well as more sympathetic to the destruction it caused, and this has left scholars wondering if he may have been a troubadour.
[54] *Ibid*., 40. The Lauragais was an area in the Languedoc between the cities of Toulouse and Carcassonne.
[55] *Ibid.*, 42.

cousins for control of their territories [56]. This endemic warfare made dissent harder to track, and many towns and villages that displayed elements of Catharist tendencies were supported by the nobility.

As such, Bernard of Clairvaux travelled to the Lauragais to ensure that the true Word of God was heard by the people of southern France, in hopes that they would end their erroneous ways and their secretive heresy. Bernard's sermon of the *Song of Songs* in 1144 was in response to a letter sent by Everwin of Steinfeld regarding dissenters in Cologne, which was the first instance where "heretics" of this sort were seen publicly [57]. Parts of the Bernard's sermon that were not previously analyzed contained good examples of Scriptural analysis and interpretation. Concerning the food that was deemed as prohibitory, Everwin denotes that "they forbit every kind of milk and what is made therefrom and whatever is born of coition"; this is directly in line with what is expressed in 1 Timothy 4:1-3, which stated "…in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving…" [58] This also correlates to a certain degree of apocalypticism, one of the categories espoused by medieval churchmen in their anti-heretical polemics.

C) The failed sermon at Verfeil, 1145

While a large degree of attention should be given to the various preaching sermons given by Bernard during his time in the Languedoc in 1145, the one at Verfeil (given sometime between 2 July and 31 July) will be analyzed in some depth. One of the main sources for events in Bernard's life is Geoffrey of Auxerre, who wrote a vita of his saintly exploits. However, William of Puylaurens, a 13th century chronicler and one of the main sources for the Albigensian crusade, mentions the preaching at Verfeil being an utter failure [59]. Bernard attempted to preach to the nobility inside the church, to persuade them to help the cause of the orthodox, and suppress heresy, but they would not listen and left in the middle of his sermon; he tried to preach again, this time outside the church's walls, but the people of the town knocked their

[56] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 48.
[57] The reason behind them being described as "heretics of this sort" was because the name "Cathars" was only first recorded by Eckbert of Schönau approximately 20 years later, in 1163.
[58] *Orthodox Study Bible*, 1636-1637; *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 129.
[59] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 98.

doors continuously to drown out the Bernard's words [60]. According to William, the chronicler, when he "shook the dust from his feet", it was as if a curse was placed on the town; according to folklore, this curse remained until the town was "liberated" by the eventual crusade leader Simon de Montfort, 5th earl of Leicester [61]. The biblical interpretation and usage of Scripture concerning this event was quite interesting. Bernard dusted off his feet, the same way Christ told his disciples to do, "And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them" (Luke 9:5) [62]. The curse being lifted once a crusader liberated the city from heretics was an interesting anecdote, and it shows the propagandistic aspects of the source, delineating that a town riddled with heresy was affected by the curse of an orthodox preacher.

Part 3: Religious dissent and its challenges to society in the Languedoc

While the Cistercian preaching missions in southern France ultimately failed, Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) was adamant to free the citizens from heresy. The continuous spread of heresy, followed by the murder of Cistercian papal legate Pierre de Castelnau in 1208, angered Innocent, and the Albigensian crusade was launched in 1209, as the only viable option to destroy heresy. However, a very humble and learned cleric would prove that there was yet another way. With the help of Fulk of Toulouse, Innocent commissioned Dominic of Guzmán, the future founder of the Order of the Preachers, to pick up where the Cistercians had left off [63]. Dominic set up preaching missions, would perform his sermons barefoot, and criticized ecclesiastical wealth [64]. This, it would seem, was something that most modest people wanted to hear. It turned out to be a success, as Dominic appealed to the people who looked for spiritual strength, but in a less hierarchical way. If congregants were in search of evangelical, apostolic poverty, why not show them this poverty [65].

A) The repressive tactics of the Inquisition

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the most important church

[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*, 99.
[62] *Orthodox Study Bible*, 1382; See also Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 99.
[63] Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 119.
[64] Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 119.
[65] *Ibid.*

council of the Middle Ages, was a turning point for the dispensation of justice concerning heresy. Heretics and all who harboured them were now enemies of Christendom, and Pope Innocent III gave the Dominican order the power to create an institution that would systematically search and supress heresy, the Inquisition.

The repressive tactics and punishments proposed by inquisitors were hard and swift, but only if they did not get the answers they were looking for. In returning to the idea of heresy being a threat to the social order, inquisitors sought to bring out the redemptive qualities of the church, and proposed that all those who confessed about knowing, seeing, or aiding heretics, would be returned into the loving arms of the church [66]. As such, this was a system of coercion and stigmatization that looked to dismantle the trust people placed in one another, potentially leading to alienation and communal disassociation, not to mention leaving victims subject to open violence [67]. The aspects concerning alienation were of no concern to inquisitors; as long as they got pertinent information, their job was done. Issues concerning communal rejection may have also been used as a propagandistic tool, displaying harsh judgement on a perpetrator who deviated from the norm. This is evident when inquisitors came together to conduct sermones generales, general sermons, which included a large number of people who were judged on their faults together [68]. It is possible that friend condemned friend, or brother condemned brother; the point was to administer the divine justice that was given to the inquisitors by God and pope.

The administering of punishment was where the inquisition really showed its power. A proposed grace period and relative flexibility was given to people who had important information to confess. Some confessed their crimes of heresy, some condemned others; those who were involved with heretics, harboured them, or were heretics themselves were labelled with a yellow cross and forced to do some sort of penitential act [69]. Heresy was a serious offence, and the inquisition wanted to let others know that the church was merciful, but just. Other forms of punishments that could be administered went as such: mutilation, exile, fines, and execution [70]. Some of these should be analyzed accordingly. Mutilation was only permissible after Pope Innocent IV's *ad extirpanda* bull, which gave, somewhat surprisingly,

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[66] James B. Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1997), 66.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Ibid.*, 73.
[69] Given, *Inquisition*, 75.
[70] *Ibid.*, 67.

ecclesiastical authorities the permission to spill blood. Executions were another interesting element of the inquisition's power. Heretical executions were administered only after a previously penitent heretic had relapsed and was found committing the crime a second time; as a spiritual institution, the church could not take a life, but the secular authorities could [71]. The ecclesiastical authorities worked in tandem with the secular ones to ensure that second-offence heretics were properly tried, and swiftly executed [72].

Given denotes that the lesser punishments did not make perpetrators fear the church that much more after they were deemed guilty. Those that watched these punishments as they happened were the ones that left frightened [73]. This tactic instilled a sense of personal responsibility, to never get on the wrong side of the church authorities, and by extension, the state [74]. These "therapeutic" judgements were dispensed for moral reconstruction, as the church looked to redeem sinners, once again permitting them to live within the society of Christians, but knowing that if they recanted, they would face a similar fate [75].

Conclusion

When comparing elements defining orthodoxy and heresy, it was quite hard to delineate differences between them in the early church. However, the same can be said for the 12th century, and although the lines of division were slightly bolder, explanatory aspects were still quite nuanced, and it all came down to a question of interpretation.

Interpreting Scripture did not always lead to embracing aspects of the true faith, it also led to erroneous thinking that needed to be fixed before the consequences became too severe. Whether literacy played a more important role than previously indicated in relatively unclear, however, it is possible that heretical tendencies may have required the use of certain people who were learned in the law. Notaries may have been *credentes*, or they may have worked for wage, it cannot be known for sure.

Dualism was considered a severely debilitating doctrinal error, and Cathars were interpreting various passages of Scripture that coincided with their dualistic tendencies. Although some contradictions

[71] *Ibid.*, 74.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] *Ibid.*, 78.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*

in Scripture were evident, they may not be enough to warrant a complete deconstruction of dualistic errors and how they came about, at least not for a short paper such as this. Preaching was an important tool used by medieval churchmen to counter any spreading of false teachings. Unfortunately, the Cistercian preaching campaigns purported by Bernard of Clairvaux in 1145 were a failure, as were subsequent preaching campaigns after that. The Order of the Preachers, spearheaded by Dominic of Guzmán, helped exemplify and demonstrate what apostolic preaching meant, and it proved to be a success.

The inquisitorial tactics administered in southern France after the death of Catharism were indeed repressive, but in the eyes of the church, they needed to be done. As with any institution that displayed some power and authority, deviants needed to be put in their place to ensure that order and serenity would never again be challenged.

Incorporation Into the Mystical Body of Christ as a Key Soteriological Notion in Thomas Aquinas

Louis-Joseph Gagnon

THOMAS AQUINAS did not compose a separate treatise on salvation. His soteriological reflection unfolds in dependence on the person of Christ, the savior of men. This state of affairs leads to a diversity of interpretations among contemporary scholars. They consider the *IIIa pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*) as the common ground for fruitful research, especially questions 46 to 49 on the passion of Christ. In question 48, Thomas employs four soteriological models - merit, satisfaction, sacrifice and redemption - to explain the salvation wrought by Christ's passion. However, considering these models and the *IIIa pars* solely insufficiently synthesizes Aquinas' doctrine of salvation. Aquinas grounds salvation more deeply in the incarnation and the trinitarian missions. In a nutshell, salvation in Thomas is the trinitarian communication of grace mediated by the humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word, in order to remedy sin and deify humankind, configurating us to Christ through incorporation into his mystical body and making us partakers of the divine nature.

This paper focuses on the notion of incorporation in the wake of Thomas Aquinas' soteriology. It engages with a critical analysis of the idea of incorporation into the mystical body of Christ as found in the treatise on Christ (*ST* IIIa, q. 1-59) and on the sacraments (*ST* IIIa, q.

60-90), where Aquinas explicitly uses the notion [1]. It argues that incorporation is a key notion in Thomas' doctrine of salvation since it plays a pivotal role in articulating Christ's communication of grace to rational creatures.

Since the research focuses on the intertwining between this notion and Thomas Aquinas' account of salvation, the first part of the paper portrays some Thomistic understandings of salvation. The analysis first offers a literature review of recent contributions about salvation in Thomas Aquinas. Secondly, a discussion draws on those contributions to provide an overall picture of Thomas' soteriology.

The second part expounds on incorporation through an internal analysis of the text. We begin by collecting the texts in the *IIIa* where Thomas employs the notion *ex professo*. Then we analyze the inner content of these texts and their dependence on the ideas of incorporation and salvation.

The third part of the paper is devoted to evaluating and critiquing the analysis results. We assess whether the notion of incorporation is a key element of Thomas Aquinas' soteriology. We also show our appreciation of the idea of incorporation into the mystical body of Christ in itself. To this end, the critique highlights the advantages of the Thomistic notion as well as the limitations and objections it might encounter.

1. Recent contributions to the doctrine of salvation in Thomas Aquinas

The theme of salvation in Thomas Aquinas is not the most accounted-for aspect of his thought, but contemporary scholars do not overlook it. Nevertheless, synthetic accounts remain marginal. This section reviews eight significant recent contributions that shed light and help to understand Aquinas' notion of salvation better. Based on those contributions, the section is followed by a discussion that catches a glimpse of Thomas' soteriology.

1.1 Review of the literature

In 1964, Bernard Catão, o.p. published [2] a systematic account of salvation in Thomas Aquinas. Catão identifies a central idea that guides

[1] This paper uses the online text of the Aquinas Institute, which edited and revised the Latin version of the Leonine Commission and the Shapcote English translation, edited and revised as well. https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.III.

[2] Berrnard Catão, *Salut et Rédemption chez s. Thomas d'Aquin. L'acte sauveur du Christ.* Collection Théologie 62 (Paris: Aubier, 1965).

Thomas' soteriology: Christ saves man through human action. At the heart of his treatment, Christ's merit stands out in relation to satisfaction, redemption, or sacrifice as more apt to synthesize the Thomasian conception. Thomas explains why and how the meritorious acts of Christ are valuable to all humans. Christ possesses the capital grace from which all graces come. He illuminates the importance of Christ's meritorious moral acts for salvation.

In 1990, Romanus Cessario, o.p. published a book on satisfaction in Thomas Aquinas [3]. Cessario argues that Thomas' soteriological thinking on satisfaction evolved from a juridical understanding in his early writings to a strong personalist one in his mature works. For Cessario, Thomas conceives salvation as actualizing Christ's saving work in each believer, placing them on the path to beatitude. The central element of this vision is the restitution of the divine image that is accomplished through personal acts of satisfaction that originate in the satisfaction of Christ. Cessario makes satisfaction the key concept of salvation in Thomas.

In 1995, Joseph Wawrykow published a study of merit and grace in Thomas Aquinas [4]. Wawrykow delineates the function of merit within Aquinas' account of salvation. He notes that merit is part of the divine wisdom' plan. God has ordained creation to obtain salvation through merit: "Just as creation is designed to manifest the divine goodness outside of God, so too the salvation of human beings and their meriting of the end-term of salvation contribute in their own way to the accomplishment of the divine plan for the manifestation of the divine goodness." [5] Merit differs according to the role of creatures in the divine plan. Angels and men can merit God by their actions eminently personally. At the same time, Christ possesses grace to such a degree that his meritorious acts extend to angels and men. Salvation for Thomas Aquinas has a supracosmic dimension. It goes beyond human experience and extends to all rational creatures.

In 2002, Matthew Levering published an original book on salvation in Thomas Aquin [6]. Never before had scholars considered the

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[3] Romanus Cessario, o.p., *The Godly Image. Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas,* Studies in historical theology 6 (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990).

[4] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action. 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[5] *Ibid*., 189

[6] Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple. Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

relationship between salvation through Christ and the Old Testament. His central thesis is that Thomas' understands salvation as the fulfillment of God's work in the people of Israel, symbolized by the Torah and the Temple. Levering's thesis is both original and refreshing. It is of interest for a better understanding of how a reading of the Old Testament informs Aquinas' theology. However, Levering's thesis does not consider salvation's relationship with wounded human nature, which makes a typical soteriological reading difficult. Levering shows that for Aquinas, Christ is the saviour foretold by the Old Testament and that he fulfills the promises of the Old Law. However, the thesis does not show from what and how humanity is saved.

In 2005, Rik van Nieuwenhove wrote a chapter on the soteriology of Thomas Aquinas [7]. He approaches the topic through the lens of current theological debates, notably the issue of suffering. The author describes Thomas' understanding of how we are saved in Christ by highlighting the centrality of incorporation into Christ. It allows van Nieuwenhove to respond to Gerard O'Collins' thesis "that Aquinas contributed to "a monstrous version of redemption: Christ as the penal substitute propitiating the divine anger."" [8] Indeed, he shows that between the *Contra Gentiles* (*CG*) and the *ST*, Thomas makes a substantial shift. Whereas the *CG* emphasizes satisfaction to account for Christ's salvific activity, in the *ST*, this notion is put on the same level as merit, redemption and sacrifice. Aquinas thus better develops human participation in the salvific and satisfactory work of Christ and the sharing of divine life through faith and charity, which is carried out through incorporation, and is intimately linked to the sacraments.

In 2014, Jean-Pierre Torrell, o.p., published a thomistically inspired soteriological book [9]. The four models of salvation - merit, redemption, redemption, and sacrifice - treated by Thomas Aquinas in *ST*, IIIa, q.48 offer the basis for his outlining. Torrell compares Aquinas

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[7] Rik Van Nieuwenhove "'Bearing the Marks of Christ's Passion' Aquinas's Soteriology" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Peter Wawrykow (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 277-302.

[8] *Ibid.*, 290. Rik van Nieuwenhove touches explicitly, although briefly, elsewhere on the centrality of incorporation into Christ in Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of salvation. For example: *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 206–8: " The key presupposition, governing Thomas' soteriology, and to which I have alluded a number of times, is the intimate union between Christ and his faithful. "

[9] Jean-Pierre Torrell, o.p., *Pour nous les hommes et pour notre salut* (Paris: Cerf, 2014).

with Anselm of Canterbury and Augustine. This approach has the advantage of emphasizing the distinctive features of Thomas' soteriology. In chapter one, for example, the comparison shows that all three Christian doctors reject the idea of a debt to be paid by God to the devil in order to redeem humanity. All three authors assume Christ's salvific work proceeds from God's gratuitous love. Their fundamental difference pertaining to salvation resides in their integration of Christological elements. At this point, the thought of Thomas Aquinas proves to be original in two aspects: 1) Christ recapitulates saved humanity in himself by incorporating it into his body. 2) The explanation of the salvific instrumental efficacy of Christ's humanity accounts for the importance of Christ's human nature as a free instrument that eminently participates in the divine plan and the divine efficacy that operates salvation.

In 2017, R. Jared Staudt's chapter [10] on salvation in Thomas Aquinas analyzes the question by bringing together the treatise on grace, especially justification (*ST*, Ia IIae, q. 113), with the effects of Christ's passion (*ST*, IIIa, q. 48). Salvation has a two-fold aspect: 1) grace renews and justifies the soul by the internal liberation from sin; 2) the salvific work of Christ is the cause of justification. In the author's conclusion, justification culminates in human's participation in God, which is nothing less than deification. God, the source of grace and justification, makes Christ the mediator of this grace. He carries out this mediation in his person through his humanity, the continuity of the Church, and the sacraments. Staudt stresses grace at the heart of Thomas's understanding of salvation: "But that a man should be regenerated in Christ is grace itself; and so man's salvation is by grace." [11]

In 2021 the Dominican scholar Gilles Emery published an article that offers a well-balanced and insightful view of a challenging topic to synthesize [12]. His essay analyzes two main aspects of Aquinas'

[10] R. Jared Staudt, "Saint Thomas Aquinas" in *Christian Theologies of Salvation. A Comparative Introduction,* Edited by Justin Holcomb (New York: NYU Press, 2017), 141-59.

[11] *ST*, IIIa, q.19, a.4, arg.3.

[12] Gilles Emery, "La sotériologie trinitaire et christologique de Thomas d'Aquin" *Archa Verbi. Subsidia* 19 (2021) : 207-37. In this article, Emery builds on ideas developed in a previous article: "Le Christ médiateur : l'unicité et l'universalité de la médiation salvifique du Christ Jésus suivant Thomas d'Aquin," in *"Christus – Gottes schöpferisches Wort », Festschrift für Christoph Kardinal Schönborn zum 65*" (Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 2010), 337-55. Gilles Emery's significant contribution is enriched by a four-pages bibliography of recent studies on the topic

soteriology in his works: trinitarian and Christological. Emery's merit is to have introduced the Son and Holy Spirit's visible and invisible missions at the heart of Thomas' doctrine of salvation. For the author, "[t]he most integrative structure of Thomas Aquinas' soteriology is probably that of the Trinitarian missions (visible and invisible missions). [The wholeness of his Christology] can be located within the structure offered by the Trinitarian missions. Furthermore, this approach to Thomas' soteriology allows for an account of the interaction of Christ and the holy Spirit found in many Thomasian texts concerning salvation." [13] Emery does not mention incorporation but the four most decisive points he identifies in the salvific mediation of Christ (fullness of grace, instrumental efficacy, union of the members with Christ-Head, exemplarity) echo the notion, especially the third one [14]. Finally, Gilles Emery, following John Emery, o.p., holds the charity of Christ as the unifying theme of Aquinas' soteriology.

1.2 Results and development

What emerges from the literature review on salvation in Thomas Aquinas?

1) Synthetizing Aquinas' soteriology is by no mean a simple task. Catão, in his conclusion, informs the reader that he offered nothing much but a glimpse into Thomas' thoughts [15]. Gilles Emery starts his paper by notifying that the task bewilders even Christoph J. Amor, the author of what he considers to be the fullest account to date [16].

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of salvation in Aquinas. We cheerfully invite the reader to consult the article. Emery does not refer to Wawrykow and Levering reviewed above.

[13] Gilles Emery, "La sotériologie trinitaire et christologique de Thomas d'Aquin", *op. cit.* : 231. Our translation : "La *structure* la plus intégrative de la sotériologie de Thomas d'Aquin est probablement celle des missions trinitaires (missions visibles et missions invisibles). L'union hypostatique, l'efficience instrumentale et l'exemplarité de l'humanité du Christ, les modalités salvifiques de la passion et celles de l'exaltation du Christ, l'enseignement du Christ, l'effusion de l'Esprit Saint, la rémission des péchés, la justification (tout l'organisme de la grâce), la filiation adoptive, l'illumination et la divinisation, l'inhabitation des personnes divines, ainsi que la gloire et la béatitude ultime, peuvent être situés au sein de la structure offerte par les missions trinitaires. En outre, cette approche sotériologique de Thomas permet de rendre compte de l'interaction du Christ et de l'Esprit Saint que l'on observe dans bon nombre de textes thomasiens concernant le salut."

[14] *Ibid.*: "3) la doctrine de l'union du Christ-Tête et de ses membres qui forment "comme une seule personne mystique", par laquelle Thomas rend compte de la communication intérieur du salut (mérite, satisfaction, sacrifice) ".

[15] Bernard Catão, *op. cit.,* 165.

[16] Gilles Emery, "La sotériologie trinitaire et christologique de Thomas d'Aquin",

2) The *ST IIIa*, especially question 48 on the effects of Christ's passion, is the leading text among authors for understanding Thomas Aquinas' soteriology.

3) Wawykrow, Levering, Staudt and Emery have demonstrated the value of extending the analysis beyond the single treatise on Christ in the *ST*. However, little attention has been given to integrating the treatise on the sacraments (*ST*, IIIa, q.60-90) with the doctrine of salvation in Thomas Aquinas. Yet, the prologue of the *IIIa* explicitly states that salvation is obtained through the sacraments [17].

4) The authors differ in the interpretations of the priority given by Thomas to the four models dealt with in question 48 (merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption). For Catão, Thomas gives precedence to merit, whereas for Cessario, satisfaction is the key concept. Van Nieuwenhove observes that satisfaction, after being the main model in *CG*, became equal to the other ones in the *ST*. Torrell does not assign priority to either model. He judiciously notes that the treatise on Christ (*ST*, IIIa, q. 1-59) is structured by beginning with the savior' ontology (q. 2-26) and then intervening with his saving action (q. 27-59) [18]. In other words, the being of Christ is inseparable from his salvific action. This way of structuring is usual for Thomas: *operari sequitur esse*, the action follows the being [19].

5) Thomas Aquinas uses other essential notions than the models of *IIIa*, q.48. The explanation of Christ's merit is completed by incorporation, which makes it possible to understand how Christ's grace flows to his members. Justification highlights the Christians' actions and involvement in their salvation operated by grace. Divinization is understood as participation in the life of Christ's grace. One should also add to the list adoption and predestination, which are respectively accounted for in *IIIa*, q.23-24, and sanctification as the interior work of the Holy Spirit.

6) What, then, is the doctrine of salvation in Thomas Aquinas? Suppose we are to attempt a synthetic formulation at this stage. In that case, Christ appears to be Thomas's dominant locus of salvation, even though Emery has shown the intricacy between his soteriology and the

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op. cit.: 207. Emery refers the book of Christoph J. Amor, *"Um unseres Heiles willen…". Eine Hinführung zum Heilsverständnis bei Thomas von Aquin*, Innsbrucker theologische Studien 81 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2009).

[17] *ST*, IIIa, prologue: "Our study will focus [...] secondly on the sacraments by which we obtain our salvation."

[18] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Pour nous les hommes et pour notre salut, op. cit.*, 44.

[19] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Jésus le Christ chez saint Thomas d'Aquin: encyclopédie, op. cit.*, 23.

Trinity. The principal cause of salvation is God, where the Trinity is the first and remote cause [20]. Christ the man is the redeemer as the immediate cause. Here, Thomas deploys the crucial notion of the efficient instrumental cause of Christ's humanity in *IIIa*, q.19, a.1 that he inherited from the Greek Fathers to explain how in Christ, divine and human operations coexist [21].

For Aquinas, the coming of Christ into the world, the answer to the question of *cur Deus homo*, is determined by sin and the salvation of humankind, although he recognizes to some degree the validity of the position that maintains the independence of the incarnation based on God's power:

> Since everywhere in the Sacred Scripture the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason of the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say that the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin; so that, had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been. And yet the power of God is not limited to this; even had sin not existed, God could have become incarnate. [22]

Thomas Aquinas' preference to link the incarnation to salvation is a matter of fittingness. In the face of mystery, necessary reasons do not sufficiently account for theological discourse since God's power does not compel him to a predetermined action. Bolstered by the *bonum diffusivum sui* metaphysical argument found in the Pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas uses the same technique to ground the incarnation from the first article of the first question of the *tertia pars*:

> To each thing, that is befitting which belongs to it by reason of its very nature; thus, to reason befits man, since this belongs to him because he is of a rational nature. But the very nature of God is goodness, as is clear from Dionysius (*Div. Nom.* i). Hence, what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others, as is plain from Dionysius (*Div. Nom.* iv). Hence it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature, and this is brought about chiefly by *His so joining created nature to Himself that one Person is made up of these three—the Word, a soul and flesh, as Augustine says* (*De Trin*. xiii). Hence it is manifest that it was fitting that God should become incarnate. [23]

The incarnation of the Word is intimately dependent on a

[20] *ST*, IIIa, q.48, a.5, co.
[21] *ST*, IIIa, q.19, a.1, co.
[22] *ST*, IIIa, q.1, a.3, co.
[23] *ST*, IIIa, q.1, a.1, co.

communication that remedies sin. One could even say self-communication since the sovereign good communicates itself through the incarnation. This idea of communication is at the heart of the soteriology of Thomas. Gilles Emery explains the crucial role played by Christ mediator in this communication structured by two elements, the notion of intermediary and his binding function [24]. The first element stresses the fullness of Christ's grace as man, in perfect communion with God and humankind. The second element stresses the reunification of humanity with God, in a descending matter as Christ transmits God's gifts to humanity, and in an ascending manner, as Christ brings men to God in order to reconcile humanity with him [25]. Emery rightfully notes:

> The salvific mediation of Christ is fundamentally based on the fullness of grace (habitual grace, virtues, gifts of the Holy Spirit and knowledge) which fills his humanity and makes Christ the Head of the Church. […] One point is especially important: the grace that Christ received for himself (*gratia personalis*) is not different from the grace he received for being the Head of his Body which is the Church (*gratia capitis*); considered under two aspects, it is essentially the same and unique grace. This point will be central to an account of the communication of grace. [26]

Emery's remarks point toward the incorporation into the body of Christ as key to understanding Aquinas' soteriology. As we already observed, even though Emery does not use the term incorporation to explain the articulation of the nature of grace and its transmission to mankind to achieve salvation, what he talks about, the "doctrine of the union of Christ-Head with his members" is the exact definition of the term [27]. Extending the study of salvation to Aquinas' sacramentology,

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[24] Gilles Emery, "La sotériologie trinitaire et christologique de Thomas d'Aquin", *op. cit.*: 217: "Le médiateur se définit par deux éléments : la notion d'"intermédiaire" (*ratio medii*) et sa fonction de liaison (*officium coniungendi*). "

[25] One can perceive implicitly from these two elements the influence of the *maxime tale* principle. For the *maximum tale* principle, or 'principle of perfection', in Aquinas, see Vincent de Couesnongle, "La causalité du maximum. L'utilisation par saint Thomas d'un passage d'Aristote" *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 38 (1954) : 433-444; "La causalité du maximum. Pourquoi saint Thomas a-t-il mal cité Aristote ? " *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 38 (1954) : 658-680; Luc-Thomas Somme, *Fils adoptifs de Dieu par Jésus Christ. La filiation divine par l'adoption dans la théologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris : J. Vrin : 1997), 336-40.

[26] Gilles Emery, "La sotériologie trinitaire et christologique de Thomas d'Aquin", *op. cit,* 217-18. Our translation.

[27] See *supra* note 13.

especially Baptism, makes clear this definition [28]. Thomas Aquinas bases this communication scripturally on John 1:14.16:

> Second, He had perfection as regards the fullness of all graces, according to John 1:14, *We saw His glory . . . full of grace and truth, as was shown* (Q. 7, A. 9). Third, He has the power of bestowing grace on all the members of the Church, according to John 1:16: *Of His fullness we have all received*. And thus it is plain that Christ is fittingly called the Head of the Church. [29]

The communication of Christ is equally important when we consider the finality of man, which is full participation in the divine life [30]. As we have seen, the first and remote efficient cause of salvation is God the Trinity. The immediate and instrumental efficient cause is Christ in his humanity, by the entirety of his being and his action, but whose passion has a singular directorial character. What do they cause? Grace [31]. It is, moreover, the very effect of the sacraments, which, in the reading of the prologue, obtain salvation for humanity [32].

However, at the center of this communication emerges a considerable difficulty. In *IIIa*, q. 19, a. 4, Thomas asks: "Whether Christ could merit for others?" The first objection reads as follow: "It

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[28] For example, see *ST*, IIIa, q.69, a.5, co., quoted in note 59.

[29] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.1, co. When referring to Thomas Aquinas' use of Jn 1:14.16, a detour in the *Compendium theologiae* (*CT*) is necessary. In *CT* I, c.214, Aquinas distinguishes a threefold grace (*triplex gratia*) in Christ according to a division of Jn 1:14.16: "The first is the grace of union (*gratia unionis*), whereby the human nature, with no merits preceding, received the gift of being united in person to the Son of God. The second is the singular grace (*gratia singularis*), whereby the soul of Christ was filled with grace and truth beyond all other souls. The third is the grace of being head (*gratia capitis*), in virtue of which grace flows from him to others. The Evangelist presents these three kinds of grace in due order (John 1:14, 16). Regarding the grace of union he says: the Word was made flesh. Regarding Christ's singular grace he says: We saw him as it were the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Regarding the grace of head, he adds: and of his fullness we all have received." Recently, Franklin T. Harkins has shown the influence of John Damascene on Thomas' exegesis of Jn 1:14.16. See Franklin T. Harkins, "Christ s Perfect Grace and Beatific Knowledge in Aquinas: The Influence of John Damascene," in *Reading the Church Fathers with St. Thomas Aquinas. Historical and systematical perspectives*, eds Piotr Roszak and Jörgen Vijgen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 339-72.

[30] *ST*, IIIa, q.1, a.2, co.: "With regard to the full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life; and this is bestowed upon us by Christ's humanity."

[31] See *ST*, IIIa, q.19, a.4, arg. 3.

[32] See note 16. See also *ST*, IIIa, q.62, a.1.

would seem that Christ could not merit for others. For it is written (Ezek 18:4): *The soul that sinneth, the same shall die*. Hence, for a like reason, the soul that meriteth, the same shall be recompensed. Therefore, it is not possible that Christ merited for others." [33]How can personal merit be passed on to others? Thomas answers this difficulty by using the Adam-Christ parallel on the one hand and the Pauline notion of the mystical body of Christ on the other:

> On the contrary (*Sed contra*), it is written (Rom 5:18): *As by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life*. But Adam's demerits reached to the condemnation of others. Much more, therefore, does the merit of Christ reach others.
>
> I answer (*Respondeo*) that as stated above (q. 8, a.1), grace was in Christ not merely as in an individual, but also as in the Head of the whole Church, to Whom all are united, as members to a head, who constitute one mystical person. And hence it is that Christ's merit extends to others inasmuch as they are His members; even as in a man the action of the head reaches in a manner to all his members, since it perceives not merely for itself alone, but for all the members. [34]

Just as sin is transmitted through Adam, so the merit of Christ is communicated to the men he saves. The union with the mystical body of Christ performs this transmission, that is, by incorporation. As head, it pertains to Christ to stream grace to his members. What saving grace does he transmit? The capital grace, which is nothing other than his personal grace: "The personal grace, whereby the soul of Christ is justified, is essentially the same as His grace, as He is the Head of the Church, and justifies others; but there is a distinction of reason between them." [35]

Along with Gilles Emery's observation [36], the commentary of Torrell sheds instructive lights on this article [37]. To differ according to reason means to the angle from which we consider grace. If we consider it from the point of view of Christ, his personal grace is his habitual (or sanctifying) grace. Capital grace is the sanctifying grace of men; it is the saving mission of Christ. Thus, the grace of salvation of men is the

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[33] *ST*, IIIa, q.19, a.4, arg. 1.
[34] *ST*, IIIa, q.19, a.4, sed contra et co.
[35] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.5, co.
[36] See the text of note 26's quotation
[37] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Jesus the Christ in St. Thomas Aquinas: Encyclopedia, op. cit.*, 226, note 41.

same as that of Christ. In this sense, salvation in Thomas Aquinas is *christo-conforming* [38]. Incorporation, mediation, adoption, divinization, etc., are illuminated anew in this perspective. However, union with the mystical body of Christ has this particularity in Thomas' thought that it acts as a pivotal notion. Christ effects the interior transmission of grace only to those who are members of his body [39]. This is the criterion which allows Thomas to explain whether someone is saved by baptism: "Consequently those to whom Baptism is wanting thus [both in reality and in desire], cannot obtain salvation: since neither sacramentally nor mentally are they incorporated in Christ, through Whom alone can salvation be obtained." [40] Incorporation is, in a way, the modality of the realization of salvation through which Christ influences grace. Rik van Nieuwenhove, Jean-Pierre Torrell and, to some extent, Gilles Emery have proposed a strong intuition in seeing incorporation as a key notion in Thomistic soteriology.

This explains why in the introduction we defined salvation in Thomas Aquinas as *the trinitarian communication of grace mediated by the humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word, in order to remedy sin and deify humankind, configurating us to Christ through incorporation into his mystical body and making us partakers of the divine nature.*

[38] To our knowledge, this terminology is not found in Aquinas. It serves to interpret Thomas on the profound Christological nature of grace in his thought. Bernard Blankenhorn, o.p., speaks of *Christo-forming* grace. It is the same grace we have in mind. Blankenhorn briefly notes the conjunction between the instrumentally of Christ' human nature and his headship to explain his saving work. At our stage of reflection, we want to stay close to Aquinas vocabulary who uses the terms *conformitas* and *configuratio.* For the rich theme of *conformitas* in Thomas Aquinas, we can only refer to the beautiful pages of Jean-Pierre Torrell who also highlights the role of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in Aquinas' theology and the gap it fills in relation to the instrumental causality of Christ's humanity. Torrell shows that, for Thomas, grace, in addition to having a divine origin, is properly Christ-like, and in a strong sense. Not only does Christ cause grace, but he is also the *exemplar* to which saved humanity is conformed. Blankenhorn and Torrell's works pave the way of ours towards an enrichment and a deeper and fuller understanding of salvation in Thomas Aquinas. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Maîtres spirituel. Initiation 2* (Paris : Cerf, 2017), 183-92. For Bernhard Blankenhorn, see *The Mystery of Union with God. Dyonisian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 262-69.

[39] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.6, co.

[40] *ST*, IIIa, q.68, a.2, co.

2. Internal textual analysis of the notion of incorporation in *IIIa*, q.1-90

Union with the mystical body is pivotal in the transmission of Christ's grace to humanity. In order to grasp incorporation's meaning and to be sure of its dependence with salvation, it is necessary to delve more deeply into its conceptual content.

We will answer this prerogative through an internal textual analysis in three parts. 1) From a lemmatic search in the *Index thomisticus* [41], we will collect the passages of the *IIIa* where Thomas Aquinas uses *ex professo* the noun *incorporatio,-onis* and the verb *incorporo, -as, -are, -avi, -atum*. We add to these passages *IIIa*, q.8: *The grace of Christ as head of the Church* where Thomas discusses the meaning of the mystical body of Christ and the members that compose it. 2) We proceed to an internal textual analysis of the content of these passages, paying attention to the nature of incorporation in Thomas Aquinas and its relation to salvation.

2.1 Collection of passages dealing with incorporation in *IIIa*, q.1-90

We have compiled the results of the lemmatic search in two tables [42]. Table 1 shows the results for the noun. Table 2 shows the results for the verb. Thomas uses the noun once in *IIIa*, q.69, a.5, arg. 1 [43].

Thomas Aquinas uses the verb 31 times, in 24 different places. The uses are found almost entirely in the treatise on the sacraments, 29 cases out of 31 (94 %). They are condensed in questions 68 and 69: 22 cases in total (71 %), 9 cases in question 68 (29 %), 13 cases in question 69 (42 %). Question 68 deals with the persons who receive baptism and question 69 deals with the effects of baptism on the persons who have received it. The verb is written 29 times in the passive, except for cases 26 and 27. The complement of the passive verbs is always Christ, while the subject is always a generic notion of humanity. The subject of the verb in the active form is baptism. We must therefore understand that Christ incorporates man through baptism. Thomas uses the same quotation from Augustine four times (cases 12, 13, 17, 21) : "As Augustine says in his book on Infant Baptism (*De Pecc. Merit. et*

[41] Enrique Alarcón, "Index Thomisticus." Corpus Thomisticum. https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index.age.
[42] See the appendix.
[43] *ST*, IIIa, q. 69, a.5.

Remiss. i*), the effect of Baptism is to make those, who are baptized, to be incorporated in Christ as His members*." [44]

The notion of incorporation is intimately intertwined with Christ's body and its members. Therefore, any analysis of the notion will also have to consider question 8 of *IIIa* on Christ as head of the Church. Articles 1 to 6 are relevant to the subject. On the other hand, we leave articles 7 and 8 aside. They ask, in a sense, the counterpoint of whether the devil and the Antichrist are heads of the wicked.

The study of the notion of incorporation based on direct references to the term has one limitation. For an exhaustive analysis, we would have to complete the analysis with the numerous passages which contain the notional content of incorporation, that is, of union with the mystical body of Christ. For example, in *IIIa*, q.62, a.2, Thomas speaks of baptism, which makes one a member of Christ without using the technical term incorporation [45]. However, the analysis of *IIIa*, q.8, coupled with the direct references in the treatise on the sacraments, suffices to grasp the essence of incorporation in Thomas' thought.

2.2 Internal textual content analysis of the collected texts

Since it would be too tedious to analyze each of the passages in the tables, we focus the analysis on q.8 and the questions in table 2 concerning baptism. There, we find the essential elements that allow us to grasp the notion of incorporation in Thomas Aquinas. We read these passages from a soteriological perspective.

Before entering the heart of the analysis, a necessary distinction must be made. Incorporation has a twofold meaning. 1) *An operative sense*: the effective act which unites to the mystical body of Christ. 2) *An ontological sense*: the purpose of the effective act is to form the body of Christ in its final form. Q. 8 adopts this latter point of view. One recalls the treatise on Christ's structure enlightened by Torrell [46]. The treatise on the sacraments is concerned with the operation of Christ: "After considering those things that concern the mystery of the incarnate Word, we must consider the sacraments of the Church which derive their efficacy from the Word incarnate Himself." [47]The sacraments derive their capacity to transmit the grace of Christ, especially from his passion [48].

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[44] *ST*, IIIa, q.68, a.5, ad. 1.
[45] *ST*, IIIa, q.62, a. 2, co.
[46] See *supra* note 19.
[47] *ST*, IIIa, q. 60, prol.
[48] *ST*, IIIa, q.62, a.5.

2.2.1 The ontological sense: *IIIa*, q. 8, a. 1 to 6

The purpose of q.8 is to study the grace of Christ as head of the Church. Although Aquinas uses neither the noun nor the verb in this question, the very definition of incorporation runs through his reflections, that is, union with the mystical body of Christ.

When Thomas uses the notion of the Church as the mystical body of Christ, he is speaking metaphorically: "The whole Church is termed one mystic body from its likeness to the natural body of a man" [49]He draws this idea from St. Paul, especially Rom 12:4-5 and 1 Cor 12:12 [50]. This Pauline root ensures that Thomas grounds his thought in the Bible, which he assumed from the beginning of his exposition. Thus, through metaphorical language, Thomas deepens the biblical data. As such, one must be careful not to see an identity between the reality of the human body and the notion of the mystical body of Christ [51].

In the mystical body, Christ is the head in comparison with one of a human being in three aspects: 1) order, 2) perfection, 3) power.

1) This is the pre-eminent role of the head. Just as the head is the first part of the body (*i.e.*, its principle), so Christ is first in grace because of his closeness to God.

2) The head is perfect with respect to the five senses that it possesses entirely. In the same way, Christ possesses the fullness of all graces (Jn 1:14).

3) Power has to do with the influx of grace. The head dominates and directs actions. Likewise, Christ has the capacity to transmit grace to the members of the Church. To this end, Thomas explains that "the head influences the other members in two ways." [52]There is an *interior* influx by which the head moves the set of members. There is an *external* influx of government, human using his senses to guide his external activity. At the same time, Christ exercises by his capital grace an *interior* derivation of grace, a justifying power, and an *exterior* influx on the members through the government of the Church, directed by the bishops and the pope. However, Christ is the universal "governor" of the Church since he holds the fullness of governing grace, "in every

[49] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.1, co.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Aquinas is well aware of the limits of his approach. See *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a. 3, co. The difference between a man's natural body and the mystical body of the Church lies in the fact that the members of the natural body all exist simultaneously, whereas the members of the mystical body do not.
[52] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.6, co.

place and time and state." [53]

In the body of Christ, there is a head, but there are also members: 1) humans and 2) angels. 1) For Thomas, the whole human, body and soul, and all humans are members of the mystical body [54]. He specifies that the influence of grace is carried out primarily on the soul and secondarily on the body, applying the derivation principle. Christ acts *interiorly* in the soul to derive *exterior* acts of justice manifest visibly by the body.

The influx of Christ's grace aims at uniting all men [55] in his body. However, this union reaches various degrees among men. To explain the degrees of union, Thomas uses the Aristotelian concepts of act and potency (*actus et potentia*) [56]. Some are united to him in act 1) by glory; 2) by charity; 3) by faith. Then, 4) some are united to him in potency, which will be brought to act at the will of divine predestination; 5) some others are united to him in potency, which will never be acted out. This explanation by degree allows Thomas to attach to the members of Christ the unbelievers, *i.e.*, the non-Christians, the faithful in a state of mortal sin and the patriarchs of the Old Testament. Thus, incorporation in Thomas is universal in the most robust sense of the term. It connects people to Christ ubiquitously (place), always (time), and of all circumstances. The heavenly homeland, the *glorious Church* (*ecclesia gloriosa*) acts as the model of this triple universality. For this reason, the deceased who rejected Christ at the stage of the *pilgrim Church* (*ecclesia viator*) are uncorporated as members of the mystical body.

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[53] *Ibid.*

[54] For this paragraph, *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.2.

[55] For this paragraph, *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.3.

[56] On the use of the Aristotelian notions of act and potency in the questions of Christ's headship, Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole, o.p., explains that Aquinas' perspective grasps those who are *susceptible* of being members of the mystical body rather than Calvinistic view seeing those who are members effectively. See his book *Introduction au mystère de l'Église* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2006), 105. On act and potency, see Aristotle, *Phys.* 200b26-201a34; *Met.* IX. For Aquinas's understanding of those concepts, see his commentaries on both books. For recent contributions, see Yvan Pelletier, *La Physique d'Aristote et son commentaire par Thomas d'Aquin. Introduction, traduction et notes*. Monographies *Philosophia Perennis* 5 (Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies: Canada, 2018); Emmanuel Perrier, "Première partie. « Penser l'ἐνέργεια ,» " in *L'attrait divin. La doctrine de l'opération et le gouvernement des creatures chez Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2017), 33-90. To our surprise, we could not find a specific study on such a decisive Aristotelian concept in Thomas Aquinas in *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*, ed. by Gilles Emery o.p. and Matthew Levering (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015).

2) The angels are also incorporated into Christ [57]. Thomas' perspective here is not the *ecclesia viator*, but the *ecclesia comprehensor* (the integral Church or the glorious Church). It is the Church in its final stage, reaching its fullness. Teleologically, "it is manifest that both men and angels are ordained to one end, which is the glory of the Divine fruition." [58]. However, it is the man Christ who possesses the fullness of grace because of his closeness to the nature of divinity. Following the same logic of derivation, the beatitude of the angels, which is a grace for them, originates from Christ himself. That is why he is their head [59].

2.2.2 The operative sense: incorporation through baptism

Operari sequitur esse. To fully grasp the nature of incorporation, examining its ontology is insufficient. We must also look at its operative meaning.

Thomas Aquinas makes it clear that incorporation into Christ happens through baptism. The most suggestive text which ties in neatly with the considerations of *IIIa*, q.8, is found in *IIIa* q.69, a.5. Thomas asks the question, "Whether certain acts of the virtues are fittingly set down as effects of Baptism, to wit—incorporation in Christ, enlightenment, and fruitfulness?" [60] It is worth quoting his answer in full:

> I answer that by Baptism man is born again unto the spiritual life, which is proper to the faithful of Christ, as the Apostle says (Gal 2:20): *And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God*. Now life is only in those members that are united to the head, from which they derive sense and movement. And therefore it follows of necessity that by Baptism man is incorporated in Christ, as one of His members. Again, just as the members derive sense and movement from the material head, so from their spiritual Head, i.e., Christ, do His members derive spiritual sense consisting in the knowledge of truth, and spiritual movement which results from the instinct of grace. Hence it is written (John 1:14, 16): *We have seen Him . . . full of grace and truth; and of His fullness we all have*

[57] For this paragraph, see *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.4.
[58] *ST*, IIIa, q.8, a.4. co.
[59] In his magistral dissertation, François Daguet, o.p., shows in-depth how Thomas Aquinas understands the membership of the angels in the Church. They are not only part of the *Ecclesia comprehensores*, they are the *Ecclesia prima*, the first spiritual creatures who share the life of grace in God. *Théologie du dessein divin chez Thomas d'Aquin. Finis omnium Ecclesia* (J.Vrin : Paris, 2003), 39-59.
[60] See *supra* note 29.

> *received*. And it follows from this that the baptized are enlightened by Christ as to the knowledge of truth, and made fruitful by Him with the fruitfulness of good works by the infusion of grace. [61]

This passage takes up several elements of q.8 analyzed above: the analogy of bodies, the impulse of grace through Christ, the reference to John 1,14.16. Thomas Aquinas adds the three effects of baptism: incorporation, illumination and fecundity. However, illumination and fecundity depend on incorporation into Christ. The sacrament of baptism operates the incorporation. Moreover, Thomas qualifies incorporation as a spiritual regeneration, which fits well with the life of grace of the faithful who put on a new body.

Why is incorporation through baptism operative? The answer to this question is taken from the instrumental nature of the sacrament. Thomas applies to the sacraments the distinction between efficient principal cause and efficient instrumental cause [62]. Like Christ, whose humanity is united to the divinity, the sacraments are a *separate* or *external* instrumental cause [63]. They derive their operative power from God through the humanity of Christ, and in a particular way, from his passion. In this sense, the operation of salvation through baptism becomes clear: Christ always saves with a tool, in that case the dispensation of baptismal grace through baptism, that allows him to perform the union of human beings with him. However, Thomas points out that the administration of baptism as such is not necessary for the attainment of salvation, in the case of baptism of desire, for example, since God is not intrinsically bound to his sacraments to dispense his grace [64].

The approach to baptismal incorporation allows us to grasp the deep meaning of salvation in Thomas Aquinas. He uses specific formulations to define salvation through baptism. For example:

> Men are bound to that without which they cannot obtain salvation. Now it is manifest that no one can obtain salvation but through Christ; wherefore the Apostle says (Rom 5:18): As by the offense of one unto all men unto condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men unto justification of life. But for this end is Baptism conferred on a man, that being regenerated thereby, he may be incorporated in Christ, by becoming His member: wherefore it is written (Gal 3:27): As many of you as have been baptized in Christ,

[61] *ST*, IIIa, q.69, a.5, co.
[62] *ST*, IIIa, q.62, a.1.
[63] *ST*, IIIa, q.62, a.5.
[64] *ST*, IIIa, q.68, a.2, co.

> have put on Christ. Consequently it is manifest that all are bound to be baptized: and that without Baptism there is no salvation for men. [65]

Baptism is the external instrument by which Christ incorporates men. *Stricto sensus*, the grace of baptism procures salvation since the administration of the sacrament does not restrict God from bestowing his grace.

3. Evaluation and critique of the notion of incorporation

3.1 Evaluation

Is incorporation a key notion in the soteriology of Thomas Aquinas? Following the insight of van Nieuwenhove, Torrell and Emery, incorporation into Christ is crucial to articulate Aquinas' doctrine of salvation.

The operative meaning associated with the sacrament of baptism indicates that Thomas understands spiritual regeneration as the integrating process into the mystical body of Christ. The sacrament of salvation is nothing more than becoming a member of that body.

Moreover, the ontological meaning reveals that incorporation is not merely an operation, but it transforms human nature. We have already mentioned the notion of Christo-conforming grace. In speaking of salvation as incorporation, Thomas teaches that to be saved is nothing but becoming Christ alike as part of his spiritual body.

The combination of the two meanings reveals that incorporation is at the center of the communication of salvation through Christ, articulating the transmission of the personal grace of the savior to human beings, and more broadly to all rational creatures, through capital grace.

3.2 Advantages and limitations of the concept of incorporation

Firstly, the notion of incorporation in Thomas Aquinas has the advantage of being, above all, biblical. He reuses the Pauline image of the mystical body. It also reverberates in Augustine. Thomas does not think in a vacuum. His thinking is rooted in Scripture and tradition.

Secondly, the notion of incorporation bridges Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology and sacramentology in Thomas Aquinas. It is a fundamental unifying concept of his theology.

Thirdly, unification with the mystical body of Christ has the

[65] *ST*, IIIa, q.68, a.1, co.

advantage of introducing a communal element to soteriological considerations. Salvation is not just a private matter. It is even essentially collective. Men are saved insofar as they integrate the Church, whose form of life is the model of the heavenly homeland. Moreover, this union is not only between men, but it assumes all rational creatures, extending to the angels. The conception of the spiritual sense of grace, which reaches the body secondarily and the soul principally (*ST* IIIa, q.8, a.2), seems to rule out the thesis of the salvation of non-rational creatures. As a final point, let us add that the logic of derivation that Thomas employs in his theology of the mystical body is also a principle of organization for the Church *in via*. The body is governed by the bishops and by the pope.

Aquinas' metaphorical approach to the mystical body of Christ is not without disadvantages. First of all, the examples drawn from natural bodies, which were frequent in the Middle Ages, are not based on the same biological perspective as that used today. The head is the first in order if we start from above. It is different if we start from below. Should we then speak of Christ as the foot of the Church? Of course, what governs the comparison is the principle of fullness, which stands on the presupposition of Christ's perfection. Nevertheless, the image loses something of its effect, so much so that the analogy may seem rather zany than enlightening to a contemporary reader.

Let us concede the metaphor and recognize that the burden of capturing it appropriately rests on the reader. Still, there remains an ambiguity in the comparison. What is the starting point of the metaphor? Is it the biblical data, the mystical body? Or is it instead the natural body? In Thomas' view, it is biblical that is primary. He begins his answer to *IIIa*, q.8, a.1 with the Paulinian expression. In this case, however, how does the reading of the natural body not take place according to the prerogatives of the mystical body? In other words, the comparison does not bring together two distinct realities. Instead, the mystical body determines the analogy. That perspective risks reading into the natural body what belongs only to the mystical body, which would no longer be an analogy.

Other difficulties emerge from the notion of incorporation as conceived by Thomas Aquinas. Does the notion solve the problem of the transmission of Christ's merits to the faithful? It is doubtful since the explanation Thomas gives presupposes that man is already a member of the body of Christ before he is saved. He uses the Aristotelian philosophical distinction of act and potency to show that Christ is the head of all living men and the righteous of the past. But in

this case, what use is baptism in incorporating men into Christ? There is tension between the operative and ontological sense that borders on contradiction. On the one hand, Thomas conceives of salvation as a spiritual regeneration, the incorporation into Christ through baptism. On the other hand, he recognizes as members of the mystical body, in *potentia*, the unbelievers and the patriarchs.

With reverence, we undertook to uncover potential questions the reader of Aquinas might ask from the text and to stimulate a deeper understanding of Aquinas's theology. Rather than being an acute critical investigation, this section seeks to point out specific questions and difficulties that emerge from analyzing the notion of incorporation in Aquinas. Some might even refute our counterpoints, for example, by saying that metaphor and analogy are not formally distinguished enough. It is in the spirit of discussion that this section must be understood.

4. Conclusion

The notion of incorporation into Christ is part of Thomas Aquinas's theology of the mystical body. This study picks up on the intuition of Rik van Nieuwenhove and Jean-Pierre Torrell to see incorporation as a key notion in Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of salvation. It articulates the transmission of Christ's grace to his members for their salvation and eternal beatitude. From an operative point of view, baptism accomplishes spiritual regeneration through the incorporation of men into Christ. The ontological perspective unfolds what it means to be a member of Christ. Christ is the head of all rational creatures in every time, place and circumstance. He is the head of the glorified as of the unfaithful, sinners, patriarchs and angels. The logic of derivation structures the Church, which the pope and the bishops govern. In the ontological sense, the community dimension of salvation is perceived.

The notion of incorporation is not free of criticism. We have criticized Thomas’s analogical approach. Moreover, we have revealed a tension between the operative and the ontological sense. How can one affirm incorporation through baptism while maintaining that the mystical body contains unbaptized members?

This two-part method of critical analysis has the advantage of focusing first on an adequate understanding of Thomas Aquinas's thought before engaging in any critique aimed at appreciating its scope and limitations. In addition, the literature review allows situating the study in current Thomistic discussions. On the other hand, internal textual analysis has one main limitation. It does not take into account

external elements, such as the historical context of Thomas as well as the theological issues from which his thought emerges. A comprehensive appreciation must restore Thomas to the medieval understanding of the mystical body. This contextual analysis would prove very enlightening to conceive more accurately the conceptual delimitations in which Thomas' thought unfolds.

Appendix

Table 1: Lemmatic search for the noun *incorporatio, -onis* in *ST*, IIIa, q.1-90 (Lemma 40 918 in the *Index thomisticus*)				
Case	**Location**	**Reference**	**Terms**	**Quote**
	q. 69: The effects of baptism			
1	1	q.69, a.5, arg. 1	incorporatio	No

Table 2: Lemmatic search for the verb *incorporo, -as, -are, -avi, -atum* in *ST*, IIIa, q.1-90 (Lemma 40 921 in the *Index thomisticus*)				
Case	**Location**	**Reference**	**Terms**	**Quote**
	q.19: On the unity of the operation of Christ			
1	1	q.19, a.4, ad. 3	incorporamur	No
	q. 49: The effects of the passion of Christ			
2	2	q.49, a.3, ad. 3	incorporamur	No
	q. 62: The effect of the sacraments which is grace			
3	3	q.62, a.1, co.	incorporatur	No
	q.66: Baptism			
4	4	q.66, a.4, ad. 4	incorporantur	No
	q. 68: Those who receive baptism			
5	5	q.68, a.1, co.	incorporetur	No
6	6	q.68, a.1, ad. 1	incorporabantur	No
7	6	q.68, a.1, ad. 1	incorporabantur	No
8	6	q.68, a.1, ad. 1	incorporabantur	No
9	7	q.68, a.2, co.	incorporantur	No
10	8	q.68, a.4, co.	incorporantur	No
11	9	q.68, a.5, co.	incorporatur	No
12	10	q.68, a.5, ad. 1	incorporatentur	Yes (Augustine)

13	11	q.68, a.8, arg. 3	incorporantur	Yes (Augustine, same as case 12)
	q. 69: The effects of baptism			
14	12	q.69, a.2, co.	incorporatur	No
15	13	q.69, a.3, co.	incorporatur	No
16	13	q.69, a.3, co.	incorporato	No
17	14	q.69, a.4, co.	incorporentur	Yes (Augustine, same as case 12)
18	15	q.69, a.5, arg. 1	incorporatur	No
19	15	q.69, a.5, arg. 1	incorporatur	No
20	15	q.69, a.5, arg. 1	incorporari	No
21	16	q.69, a.5, sed c.	incorporentur	Yes (Augustine, same as case 12)
22	17	q.69, a.5, co.	incorporetur	No
23	18	q.69, a.5, ad. 1	incorporati	No
24	18	q.69, a.5, ad. 1	incorporantur	No
25	18	q.69, a.5,ad. 1	incorporari	No
26	19	q.69, a.7, ad. 1	incorporat	No
	q. 70: On circumcision			
27	20	q.70, a.4, co.	incorporantem	No
	q. 73: On the sacrament of the eucharist			
28	21	q.73, a.3, ad.2	incorporari	No
	q. 74: The matter of the eucharist			
29	22	q.74, a.8, ad.2	incorporatur	No
	q. 80: On the use or reception of the sacrament of the eucharist			
30	23	q.80, a.4, co.	incorporatum	No
31	24	q.80, a.11, co.	incorporari	No